the weekly
Standard

SEPTEMBER 9, 1996 $2.95

IT TAKES A DONKEY

Fred Barnes
David Brooks
Tucker Carlson
Andrew Ferguson
David Frum
William Kristol
Matt Labash
John Podhoretz
The Editors

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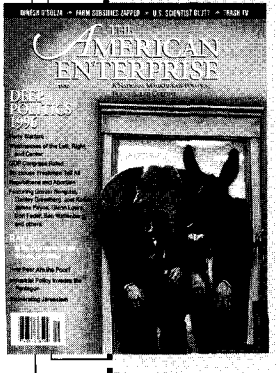

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Let's Rate the Convention!

We thought it couldn't get worse than San Diego, but since the Democratic convention was probably the worst in American history, The Weekly Standard has decided to give out the same prizes we did in San Diego—the coveted Treacly Awards! (Hint: They're dominated by Al Gore.)

For **Most Grotesque Exploitation of Personal Tragedy to Score Rhetorical Points**, the nominees are: The Democratic party, for its use of Christopher Reeve; Barbara Boxer, for using in a videotape the father of a boy who died from eating a tainted burger at Jack-in-the-Box; Kate Michelman, for talking about her abortion; and Al Gore, for the use of his sister's death from cancer. And the winner is . . . **It's a four-way tie!**

For **Best Macarena Rendition**, the nominees are: Al Gore and Chris Skoczynski. And the winner is . . . **Chris Skoczynski**, the sign-language lady who taught the delegates daily how to do the world's easiest and dumbest dance.

For **Biggest Lie of the Convention**, the nominees are: Every delegate who claims to have been in Chicago in 1968 "outside" the convention hall; and Al Gore, for that ridiculous story about Bill Clinton's telling Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, "As long as I occupy this office, you will never enact this plan. Because as long as I am president, I won't let you." And the winner is . . . **Al Gore**, who would fail a polygraph test.

For **Most Complete Tautology Offered from the Podium**, the winner by acclamation: **Dianne Feinstein**, for these words in praise of Bill Clinton: "He knows that the best way to prevent crime is to stop it from happening."

For **Most Ludicrous Praise of Bill Clinton**, the winner is . . . **Democratic national co-chairman Don Fowler**, for, "He evokes as much emotional energy, as much unqualified support, as John Kennedy did."

For **Most Self-Aggrandizing Bill Clinton Quote**, the nominees are: Bill Clinton, for telling *Time* that Chelsea's "a lot like me, in that she's got a great sense of compassion and feeling for other people"; and Bill Clinton, for telling *U.S. News*, "I would agree that I've grown in office. It happened through the crucible of decision making and through the fights that we had to fight, through the victories as well as the defeats, and also, I think, through the human losses, which are very humbling, both our personal losses, Hillary's and mine, and the losses the country sustained." And the winner is . . . **Bill Clinton** in *Time*, because he can't even talk about his daughter without puffing himself up.

For **Most Mean-Spirited Remark**, the nominees are: Mario Cuomo, for, "Republicans . . . are the real threat to our women. They are the real threat to our children. . . . They are the real threat to fairness. They are the real threat to equality"; and Al Gore, for saying Republicans "want to give health-insurance rip-off artists a license to change Medicare." And the winner is . . . **Mario Cuomo**, who should talk.

Al Gore and His Tobacco Woes

Al Gore riveted the convention last week with the story of his sister Nancy's death from lung cancer and how it was caused by smoking. Nancy Gore Hunger died in 1984. In 1988, campaigning for the presidency in North Carolina, Gore had this to say: "Throughout most of my life, I raised tobacco. I want you to know that with my own hands, all of my life, I put it in the plant beds and transferred it. I've hoed it. I've chopped it. I've shredded it, spiked it, put it in the barn and stripped it and sold it."

At a luncheon the day after his speech, Gore was challenged by Morton M. Kondracke of *Roll Call* to explain this jarring inconsistency. Here is his answer: "The truth is, Mort, I myself was still an example of the phenomena that I've described a moment ago. In spite of having suffered the loss, I still felt a numbness that prevented me from integrating into all aspects of my life the implications of what that tragedy really meant. And I, uh, it's a natural human failing that we all have. It's a time to fully accept the most important lessons in life. A time for a new awareness, a new way of thinking again, slowly and you grow into it. A few years after that, I surrendered the

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annual check that I received from . . . my tobacco . . . but I continued to receive it for several years even after her death. My father and mother continued to grow tobacco on our farm for several years after her death. . . . We experienced that numbness characteristic of loss. And sometimes you never fully face up to things that you ought to face up to. You never fully learn the lessons that life has to teach you. But part of the cause I was constantly, um, tried to think about these questions due to my career in public service. I was blessed with opportunities to come back to it and examine it over a year again. And as I did, I grew into a greater awareness of the fact that this, this same tragedy that hit my family was hitting 400,000 families a year."

It appears, then, that our vice president was in denial, but came out of it—just at the time when tobacco began to show up really poorly in the polls. Interesting.

Persecution Complex

Remember all those vicious personal attacks on Hillary Clinton at the Republican convention in San Diego by speaker after speaker? Speaker after speaker at the Democratic convention seemed to. "Stop attacking the president's family," Democratic chairman Chris Dodd declared indignantly. Al Gore even sucked up to President Clinton by lauding him for not attacking his opponent's wife. So which Republicans insulted Hillary and what did they say? Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, fingered Bob Dole, James Baker, and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas. Dole, of course, zinged Hillary's book, *It Takes A Village*, by saying, "It takes a family to raise a child," which was perfectly respectful. Baker delivered this shot: "Bill Clinton has done for foreign policy what Hillary did for health care." And Hutchison's commentary? "In the real world, we don't want a village to raise a child."

Vile personal attacks, huh? What Democrats are trying to do is create a double myth: first, that Hillary's just a down-home traditional first lady, and thus above criticism, and second, that Republicans have attacked her on personal grounds, not as the author of a public-policy book and drafter of the most sweeping piece of domestic legislation in three decades. Wrong on both counts.

The November Floor Plan

Bob Dole's strategists would do anything to get inside information on which states the Clintonites hope to contest and which they have already written off. Well, look no further. We figured it out: Just study the floor map of their convention.

The principle is simple: The farther from the podium a state delegation found itself, the less importance the Democrats attach to it. Some savants have suggested that Georgia is "in play" this fall, but the floor plan, which showed the poor Peach Staters up somewhere in the rafters, suggested otherwise. And from where they sat, Texas delegates shouldn't be expecting many presidential visits between now and November. Ditto Virginia and Louisiana. Kansas is a goner. How did Democratic convention planners spell "Wyoming"? S-I-B-E-R-I-A. And Alabama? Hey, Samoa had better seats than Alabama.

How about the so-called "swing states"? Pennsylvania and Ohio held down the east and west flanks on the main floor, a sure sign that President Clinton feels they're due for major sucking-up. Behind Pennsylvania and Ohio, in excellent seats, were the electoral Big Kahunas of New Jersey and California. Slurp-slurp.

Of course, no rules are hard and fast—not in Bill Clinton's America. Sweetheart deals still take precedence over raw power politics. The Arkansas delegates were placed dead center, right below the podium, perhaps as a reward for the long hours they've put in giving depositions to Ken Starr back home.

The saddest cases are those delegations whose Democratic fealty is so certain convention planners could afford to offend them. Like puppy dogs, they keep coming back no matter how hard you kick 'em. If they had had any pride, the delegates from D.C. and Vermont would have risen up—assuming they could breathe that thin air up where they sat—and walked out. But of course they didn't. No doubt they're sustained by the hope that someday, somehow, they can be as important as Arkansas.

Roger Clinton's Keys

A few mischievous souls at the big Comedy Central party on the first night of the convention were walking around with urine-specimen containers labeled: "Reelect Clinton/Gore '96, Just Say No to White House Drug Abuse." One reporter made a beeline for a profusely sweaty Roger Clinton, who has not had the best of luck with such tests in the past.

Cooler, or perhaps more sober, heads discouraged the confrontation. "C'mon, this is Roger Clinton we're talking about," said another ink-stained wretch enjoying the festivities at Green Dolphin St., a North Side club. "If he can pass a drug test, he'll probably try to—right here in the dining room."

The First Brother had already gotten himself into a little trouble. He drove up to Green Dolphin St. in a van and decided to jump out and look in at the talent before committing himself to the event. He left the motor running. When he decided to stay, he came back to the van—and found he had locked his keys inside. Comedy Central personnel called the Chicago police, who arrived with a

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Slim Jim and saved the First Brother from further despoilment of the atmosphere.

Prophetic Press Release

"There's a big market out there," said Bill Bradley last Tuesday, "for people who want straight talk about race—for people who want to realize the full extent of their humanity." Humanity-extent realization has been Bradley's stock in trade ever since he announced his retirement last year. And to further his work, he hosted a panel discussion at Chicago's Field Museum with *Race Matters* author Cornel West, Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, and Pulitzer-prize-winning novelist Richard Ford, among others.

The discussion, modestly titled "Conversation on Race and the Creative Imagination," was long and involved and not altogether coherent. But the most arresting thing about it had nothing to do with what the discussants said. As reporters filed into the event, they were handed a press release that gave them a detailed account of the discussion before it had even happened! "When a national leader and leading authors were asked today how to improve communication between the races," read the press release, "they focused on a simple but powerful idea . . ." The handout went on to describe how many people attended the discussion, what the mood was in the hall, how the participants handled audience questions, and how long the palaver lasted. It even quoted what the participants said, notwithstanding the inconvenient fact that they hadn't said anything yet.

And you know what? It was pretty accurate! Only one glitch: The press release quoted at length participant/author Sandra Cisneros, who said some pretty moving things. Only, she hadn't said them. Somewhere between the writing of the press release and the actual discussion, Cisneros took sick and skipped the show.

No-shows were a problem all that afternoon. A Progressive Caucus designed to "save the soul of the Democratic party" could not save itself. Its flier promised that Gloria Steinem and Rep. Ron Dellums would speak. They were nowhere in evidence, disappointing all 60 attendees. A disheartened Alan Charney of the Democratic Socialists of America thundered, "Why isn't Bill Clinton responding to the leftist base of the Democratic party?" He shouldn't feel too bad; apparently, even the leftist base isn't responding to the leftist base anymore.

Lerner, Driscoll, Magaziner

All the speechifying, delegate traffic, and media oversaturation—What Does It All Mean? For an answer on the convention floor, we gingerly approached the man who brought new meaninglessness to the word "meaning" when he coined the phrase "the politics of meaning"—yes, Michael Lerner himself, the editor of *Tikkun*, who was right there on the floor.

Once thought to be Hillary's guru and now thought to be good for nothing, Lerner seemed like just the man to help us understand what exactly singer/saxophonist Phil Driscoll was doing on stage the first night. Performing an

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homage to Ray Charles's voice? To Joe Cocker's aneurysms? And indeed he did; the misty-eyed Lerner showed us that sometimes intellectuals must stop intellectualizing and simply emote. When we asked him what it all meant, he brushed us back: "I'm in the middle of a sort of moment here," quoth Rabbi Lerner. Thank you, O Sage of West 100th Street!

Speaking of sages, a lone figure in a loud stars-and-stripes tie walked the length of the United Center that same night looking for a concession stand with a manageable line. Nobody seemed to know that the man was Ira Magaziner, who once tried to take over the American health-care system.

The Vice-Tipper of the U.S.

For all the media moaning about too-tightly scripted conventions, one needed only visit peripheral events like "Women Win '96, A Fund-Raising Celebration for Democratic Women" to witness the dangers of flying blind. All five female Democratic senators turned out on the afternoon of Aug. 26 to honor Hillary Clinton and Tipper Gore, bringing with them their softest pastels, their sassiest sass, and their sloppiest dance moves. The only things they left at home were their brains. Before Barbara Mikulski introduced Patty Murray of Washington as being from the "great state of Seattle," she tried to delineate the differences between the parties by saying, "Now we Republicans are different from Democrats . . ."

But she was the height of eloquence next to Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun, who when ticking off the gains women have made said, "As women, we are U.S. senators today, we are members of the House of Representatives today, we are members of the cabinet today, [pointing to Tipper Gore] we are vice president of the, the, the . . . [we are] the first lady of the United States, we are the wife of the vice president of the United States." Speechwriter, anyone?

Parochial-School Blues

Mario Cuomo told the conventioneers that you couldn't do "anything better for a poor kid than what you did for a poor kid from New York City called Colin Powell, and that is give him a good public school." Here's a way to do better: Why not let a poor kid choose the nearest parochial or private school—you know, just like the ones Cuomo and Bill Clinton and Al Gore and Tipper Gore attended (never mind Chelsea Clinton, and Karenna Gore, and Sarah Gore, and Kristin Gore, and Al Gore, Jr.).

Both Bill and Mario went to Catholic schools called St. John's. Cuomo studied at St. John's Prep in Brooklyn for ten years, while young Bill attended second and third grades at St. John's Catholic school in Hot Springs. Dale Drake, a close relative of the president, has said that Bill's experience at St. John's "was the real foundation of his education. The sisters said he was a real achiever. That seemed to start him on his way." Funny he never mentions it. Funny Mario doesn't bring it up either.

Not so funny when you consider that the National Education Association sent the largest single bloc of delegates and alternates to the convention—405 in all, an 11 percent increase since 1992.

Sweet-talking Guy

When all five female Democratic senators spoke before the convention Wednesday night, we were disappointed they didn't follow the lead of Republican senators Lott, Ashcroft, Craig, and Jeffords. The men, you may recall, took off their jackets in San Diego and sang the Oak Ridge Boys' "Elvira." We know just the song the "Madam Senators" should have warbled: "Sweet-talking Guy," by the Chiffons.

This stunning girl-group number from 1963 has much to say about Bill Clinton, after all, and the way he betrayed the lady senators' liberal ideals. "Don't give him love today, tomorrow he's on his way," the song goes—a clear parallel to his betrayal of liberals after the election in 1994 and the hiring of America's foremost foot fetishist, Dick Morris.

The song cautions: "He's a sweet-talking guy, but he hasn't got a dime"—which could serve as a warning to those, like Mario Cuomo, who think a revitalized Clinton will spend a lot of money on new social programs. "Stay away from him, 'cause you know you'll never win"—a lyric suggesting that while Clinton may win, he'll do nothing to help congressional Democrats.

Lonely in the Cabinet

It's lonely these days for members of Bill Clinton's cabinet. Nobody wants their campaign advice, and they weren't invited to address the convention either. So they endured the ennui of Chicago by holding forth over breakfast or lunch with reporters. Interior secretary Bruce Babbitt allowed as how he'd be very, very interested in being nominated to the Supreme Court in a second Clinton term. (Babbitt was passed over when Clinton made Ruth Bader Ginsburg a justice in 1994.) Treasury secretary Robert Rubin made it clear he thinks a cut in individual income tax rates, even a small one, is uncalled for, now or if Clinton is reelected. Wouldn't spur the economy, he said. A rationale that didn't occur to him: letting folks keep more of their own hard-earned money. Commerce secretary Mickey Kantor disclosed the unhappy news that NAFTA has not worked quite as promised. No wonder he doesn't really like being commerce secretary.

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Casual

The Yippies' Last Stand

Chicago

I hooked up with the boy named "Free" out of curiosity and desperation. Three convention days packed with Women's Political Caucuses and DLC plenaries can leave a man spoiling for old-school high adventure. And Free promised me he was the world's "most famous Yippie alive."

Free was an original Yippie, back in '68, with Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman. A young Yippie then, he claims to be ageless now, a Kris Kristofferson-meets-Captain America with greasy-capellini hair draped out of a stovepipe Uncle Sam hat, and a permanently shirtless torso adorned by a stars 'n' stripes cape. It was hard not to notice him: on the front page of the *Chicago Tribune*; at the reprised Yippie Festival of Life in Grant Park; trying to get arrested at the United Center (he couldn't); and at a Rev. Al Sharpton rally in a West Side slum, where he inadvertently thwacked Jheri Curls off the skulls of unsuspecting congregants with his "Don't Tread on Me" flagpole.

We finally spoke as he was getting rousted by a burly Sharpton toady. "I feel a lot of solidarity with the Black Power movement," he whispered as Sharpton clamored for reparations, "but these guys are jealous of me, because I'm the most famous Yippie alive!" One would be suspicious of such a boisterous claim from such an anonymous person, except, as he correctly explained, he is quite literally part of a dying breed—"men of action, men of the street."

We fast took a liking to each other. I was his "personal media man" and he was my salvation from the National Association of Democratic Attorneys Forum. It took no time to hammer out consensus on the basic Yippie planks. The country is being controlled by transnational corporations, the NRA, and Fortune 500 board members; Mother Teresa is a fascist tool of the Right; and "McDonald's is McDeath," exploiting workers and slaughtering animals "to make terrible food with no nutritional value." That settled, he invited me along to take back the streets.

We piled into an '86 Cutlass Cruiser, and to my delight, already present were the niece of Chicago 7 member David Dellinger and 35-year-old Andrew Hoffman, son of Abbie, who looked like the old man, talked like the old man—even smelled like the old man, as he regaled me with tales of his dad's best political burlesque, what a sell-out Tom Hayden is (he recently planted a unity tree with Mayor Daley that Andrew threatened to pee on), and what a tasty chalupa Amy Carter used to be.

And that wasn't all. We were on our way to hooking up with the teenage grandsons of psychologist Abraham Maslow (Abbie's self-actualization mentor). They don't get to participate in civil disobedience much in their placid hometown of Boulder, Colo., so they've cut their activist teeth by "talking back to teachers and stuff."

It was shaping up to be the Sons of the Dead Activists Society, except David Dellinger is very much alive. We met him downtown to lead the charge into a federal court building to demand the release of Geronimo Pratt, Leonard Peltier, and all "political prisoners" (read: cop killers).

Dellinger took mere moments to map out our strategy before the original Yippies stormed the revolving door. The youngsters stayed on the periphery, chanting "Free All Political Prisoners." Old lions lay on the floor—like Wild Bill Yippie, resting a cup of coffee on his tie-dyed girth. He was obstructing a metal detector for miffed civil servants trying to step over him and get back to their systems analysis jobs for the . . . Department of Agriculture?

Yes, it seemed the Yippies had occupied the wrong building. (I figured this out by looking at the directory in the lobby.) Free was outside, guarding his flag and cadging cigarettes off friendly Chicago policemen, trying to avoid arrest so as not to be separated from his chronicler. I gently broke the news to him that we had missed the real federal court building by a few addresses. "Damn it," he said. "Well, Dellinger is 81 years old and he doesn't see too well. But this is still the Federal Plaza, so I guess we're in the ballpark."

After a 25-minute standoff, Dellinger, Hoffman, and nine others were brought out in cuffs. But the old monkey theater is no longer as tough a racket as it used to be. Sure, the cops still smirk with those born-to-be-Irish mugs and have bad mustaches, white socks, rubber heels, and round vowels. But as one pig deposited Wild Bill in his back seat like Waterford crystal, he straightened the graying Yippie's hat and brushed the Ag Department's lint off his shirt. "Your friends are going to be a while," said the arresting officer. "Why don't you guys go grab a drink and I'll call you when they're out?"

Free and I were already making plans to hit the Creative Coalition's Planet Hollywood party that night (and within two hours, the Chicago 11 would be at Berghoff's restaurant downing 10-year-old bourbon and Sauerbraten). But Free broke off our party planning, collected his thoughts, and on behalf of Jerry and Rennie and Abbie and the rest of the brotherhood, he blazoned, "You guys have been perfect gentlemen. And we are so grateful to Mayor Daley and the boys in blue."

Let the revolution continue.

MATT LABASH

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Jeffersonian America

In "The Death of Jeffersonian America?" (Aug. 26), Andrew Peyton Thomas contrasts the moral oversight of small-town America with the alleged "moral relativism" of libertarianism. This comparison stands truth on its head.

It is the small-town fishbowl model that is amoral. Its sanctions reinforce whatever local standards exist, be they the ideals seen in "Mayberry, RFD" or the soul rot of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. Libertarianism, on the other hand, is based on a clear delineation of spheres for individuals, society, and the state. It is also based on preserving the natural balance among individuals and social institutions.

Since Thomas refers to "young couples escaping the libertarian created problems" of urbanized areas, I can only assume that he is using a definition of "libertarian" that encompasses welfare statism, leniency toward violent criminals, etc.

The term "liberal" once meant "believer in personal liberty," until it was co-opted and shifted to its present meaning. Is linguistic history repeating itself?

STEPHEN BRINICH
ARLINGTON, VA

Andrew Peyton Thomas refers to "the stone-carved lips of Jefferson's statue by the Potomac." Apparently neither Thomas nor your editors bothered to note that the statue of Jefferson is made of bronze.

BETH HOMICZ
WASHINGTON, DC

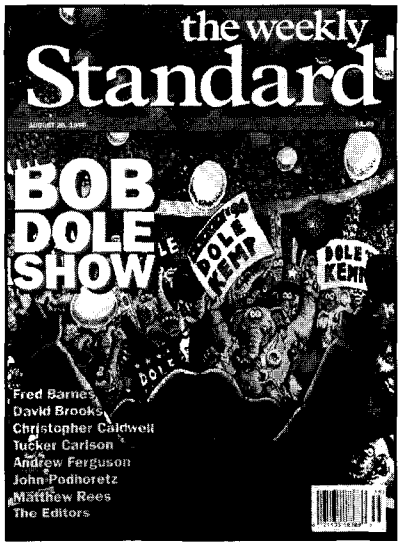
Andrew Peyton Thomas raises the question of whether Information Age Technology will corrupt us. I would say no and cite Alvin Toffler's words in *Powershift*: "Knowledge is the most democratic source of power." Information Age technology will not corrupt us, it will strengthen us. We will have more freedom—so the trend of people moving out of cities makes sense. Today's cities represent the failure of the industrial age and centralization. Thomas hits on some of the themes of decentralization. This sounds like the philosophy of the Republican party, and it makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

Maybe now we can understand the fights between Republicans and Democrats. The Democrats, the party of big government and centralization, do not want to change or they will lose power. Whether or not the Republicans lose the election in 1996, the future is unstoppable. The Democrat/liberal philosophy will be a thing of the past.

MIKE PROTO
HASBROUCK, NJ

For Conservative Punk

I would like to thank Daniel Wattenberg ("Was Punk Rock Right-Wing?" Aug. 26) for two things: for refuting Diana West's ridiculous contention that good conservatives must be as much fun as a Sunday school teacher ("Against Conservative Cool," Aug. 5) and for raising a manifesto for rightist punk-rock aficionados everywhere.



Punk rock was a political and musical reaction. For example, the passing of Jerry Garcia was an occasion of extreme rejoicing in punkdom. This may sound sick, but that wretched group embodied everything that punk rock was a rebellion against—the pollution of music by leftist politics and the drug-induced belief that rock music had transcended the confines of the primitive two-and-a-half-minute pop song.

It was towards the Grateful Dead and their fans that Jonathan Richman expressed the natural revulsion Wattenberg mentions. And it was for the ears of Ivy League brats waving North Vietnamese flags that the Ramones shouted "Hooray for the USA." Jimmy Carter and disco not withstanding, the counterrevolution had begun.

IVAN G. OSORIO
GAINESVILLE, FL

As a fellow graduate of the CBGB-OMFUG, I'll raise my glass to Daniel Wattenberg. But how did Wattenberg ever forget the Dictators? Watching the immortal Handsome Dick Manitoba roar out the lyrics to "America the Beautiful," performed without a sliver of irony, was an experience not easily matched.

J.R. DUNN
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

While Wattenberg deserves credit for highlighting a usually overlooked aspect of the punk movement, I wonder if his explanation unnecessarily complicates a fairly straightforward phenomenon.

During the early 1980s, I was an active participant in the New York subculture Wattenberg describes. I can assure you that I knew nothing of "pop formalism," "liberal white guilt," or even suburban life. Rather, like the majority of my friends—teenagers growing up in New York City—I mostly wanted to annoy my left-wing parents. One cannot overemphasize the link between the anti-establishment sentiment of the punk scene and its "right-wing" strains. Left-leaning parents, family therapy, and Quaker schools represented the establishment in our eyes. What better way to rebel than to listen to bands such as Murphy's Law singing "Ronnie Reagan, he's our man/If he can't do it, no one can!" Perhaps history will regard the CBGBs of the late 1970s and early 1980s as it does the City College of the 1940s and 1950s—an ironic nesting ground for young conservatives.

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN
WASHINGTON, DC

As a Brit who was an ardent fan of punk rock when it exploded on the scene in the mid-1970s, I can confirm that Daniel Wattenberg is exactly right when he points out that most of the

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early punks were rebelling against entrenched leftism, not "right-wing authoritarianism."

This misconception was impressed upon me when I came across a book that purported to be a history of punk. The author asserted that the Sex Pistols and similar bands were reacting to the oppression of Thatcher's Britain. Actually it was a Labour government that was in power at the time. Margaret Thatcher wasn't elected until 1979—one year after the Sex Pistols broke up.

In truth the Sex Pistols were reacting partly against the awful stagnation wrought by Labour's policies and partly against, as Wattenberg says, hippie New Leftism. "Never Trust a Hippie!" was one of their battle cries. Johnny Rotten decried Britain's stratospheric income tax rates under Labour in a radio interview. But it would be wrong to say that the Pistols were right-wing to any meaningful extent. They were really nihilists who hated everyone equally. The prevailing leftist socio-political power structure just happened to be their most convenient target.

KEVIN BLAKE
WASHINGTON, DC

NETWORKS, GO HOME!

Andrew Ferguson, in "Battle of the Network Dolts" (Aug. 26), correctly describes why America has turned off TV network news. I was amazed that the networks were going to show the convention for only an hour each night. I guess network executives thought the American public wasn't interested. In a way the executives were correct: The public is not interested in "network coverage."

I watched the convention on C-SPAN, which had gavel-to-gavel coverage and no commercials. C-SPAN provided the most accurate coverage and let the viewer reach his own conclusions. The major networks still don't get it.

ALEXANDER R. NYILAS
WADING RIVER, NY

KEEP IT LIBERTARIAN

Your editorial "Keep It Simple, Senator" (Aug. 19) would have done Bob Dole more good if you had entitled it "Make Government Smaller, Senator." Or "Just Say Now, Senator, Not in 7 Years." Instead you told Dole to say, "If you think the current level of taxation and the current size and scope of government are about right, vote for Clinton. If you think that we should pay less in the way of taxes and the government should spend less, vote for Dole." You then label this "simple. And true."

True? In all the hype about Sen. Dole, no one has cited a single occasion on which he has proposed to reduce the size of government. Rearranging the tax burden of a $1.6 trillion government doesn't cause the government to spend less. Neither do unspecified spending cuts or slowing the rate of growth of government programs.

Maybe you feel you must support Bob Dole to get rid of Bill Clinton. You would do a service to your readers by letting them know that the Libertarian presidential candidate, who will be on the ballot in all 50 states, does intend to reduce government to the absolute minimum possible—and do it immediately.

HARRY BROWNE
LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATE
FOR PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, DC

A TALE OF TWO INTERVIEWS

In a review of my book *A Tale of Two Utopias*, your reviewer, Peter Collier, tells a garbled story about seeing me in Managua in 1987, when I was a reporter for the *Village Voice* ("Rehabilitating the 60s," Aug. 12). According to Collier, I passed up the opportunity to witness the historic reopening of the anti-Sandinista newspaper *La Prensa* in favor of conducting an interview with someone described as "the leader of some small socialist sect."

I did conduct an interview. It was with Luis Humberto Guzmán, who in those days was the leader of the left wing of Nicaragua's Social Christian movement—and more recently has become the famously successful president of Nicaragua's National Assembly. Hardly a sectarian! And I did witness the reopening of *La Prensa*. All of which I described at length in my reports to the *Village Voice*—as anyone can see by looking up the back issues.

PAUL BERMAN
NEW YORK, NY

PETER COLLIER RESPONDS: ***I too interviewed Guzmán, one of those sallow, self-absorbed socialists, who, according to someone Berman quotes, was himself "a bit of a Sandinista." That there were elections in which Guzmán could participate is the result of Reagan's policy, although Guzmán, like Berman himself, is no doubt still in denial on this point. Berman did show up at La Prensa, late and on the periphery, but for him there seemed to be no there there. The first article he wrote upon returning from Nicaragua mentioned* La Prensa *only in a couple of throwaway lines. The significant sentence in this article, a chummy interview with Sandinista vice president Sergio Ramirez, is as follows: "I said to the Vice President that with these [Guatemala peace] accords . . . U.S. foreign policy seemed to be undergoing its greatest defeat since Vietnam." The wish is father to the thought!***

PEER REVIEW MATTERS

As a peer reviewer for several journals, I agree with Neal B. Freeman ("Peer Review and Its Discontents," Aug. 26) that the peer-review process of medical journals needs to be clearly explained to their readers. The proliferation of such journals aggravates the problem of quality. Since academic success is frequently measured by the quantity, and not necessarily the quality, of publications, it will be difficult to check the ever-swelling number of journals. When academic institutions scrutinize content more closely, second-tier journals will fall out of favor, and so will some of the problems associated with peer review.

RALPH M. SCHAPIRA, M.D.
MILWAUKEE, WI

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the weekly Standard

THE DICK MORRIS DEMOCRATS

Had there never been so much as a hint of sordid sex-play involving President Clinton's now-departed chief strategist, Dick Morris would still be the biggest news from the Chicago Democratic convention. And the story would still be a scandal.

Whenever it is busy stoning to death a political career like Morris's, American journalism asks itself, as it no doubt should, some Very Difficult Questions. But there is something particularly comical, almost delusional, about the way those questions have so far been answered in the present instance—about the way Morrisgate has been justified as "legitimate" news. While allegedly consorting with a prostitute, the man has helped the president reposition himself as an advocate of family values. So Dick Morris is a hypocrite. But we knew that already. And we would never much have *cared* to know the minor official secrets Morris is accused of "betraying" to the lady. Let's face it: Had his confidant been Bob Woodward instead of a call girl, Morris would still be on the job.

No, Morris has been run out of town exclusively on grounds of personal tawdriness. He has been measured against standards of private behavior generally applied only to actual public officials and candidates, the people in politics of greatest symbolic and substantive significance. Is Dick Morris really so important? Judging from the Chicago convention, and what it reveals about Bill Clinton's presidency and the Democratic party as an institution, the answer is yes, he is that important. And *that* is the scandal. Forget the hooker.

With Dick Morris, the role of the professional strategist in American politics rises to the level of pure caricature. He is the compleat modern mercenary: a "Republican" one week, a "Democrat" the next; a man for whom the stylized warfare of politics, and the manipulation of its vote-grabbing techniques, is everything; a man who not only ignores the elevated aspects of partisanship, but actively disdains them as counterproductive to victory.

And with Chicago '96—the worst, most vulgar, most corrosively cynical political convention in American history—a sitting president and his entire Democratic army have thoroughly submitted themselves to Morrisism. They have deliberately forsworn the effort to address the largest questions in American public life. The Democratic party no longer pretends to be a vehicle for the advancement of a serious American political agenda.

For them, the era of robust, meaningful big government *does* seem genuinely over. It has been replaced by an era of big sentiment, small but endless programmatic busywork, and inarticulate identity politics.

Two of four evenings in Chicago were most notably devoted to brutally direct, argument-killing invocations of personal tragedy. Vice President Gore deoxygenated the United Center for ten agonizing minutes with an emotional and (though you are not allowed to say so) exploitative description of his sister's cancer death. Two days earlier, paralyzed actor Christopher Reeve and gunshot victim Jim Brady had appeared on stage. They were powerful presences, and the United Center throbbed with empathy for them. But each was designed to disguise the real character of partisanship, not explain it. Reeve whispered that the nation needs "not a Democratic motto, not a Republican motto," but an "American motto." Brady's wife Sarah told us that her wheelchair-bound husband's misfortune is not "a Democratic or a Republican problem."

Gore did drip gallons of acid on Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich, depicting them as cold-hearted nasties you wouldn't want your daughter to marry. But he never called them "Republicans," and he rigorously avoided the word "Democrat" from start to finish, too. The vice president referred to his own party only by implication, and only for a moment. Hillary Clinton's breathtakingly arrogant explanation of how it "takes Bill Clinton" in the White House "to raise a happy, healthy and hopeful child" in today's America contained not a single explicitly partisan word. Keynoter Evan Bayh spoke the D-word . . . once. Democratic party co-chairman Christopher Dodd, renominating the president, didn't use the term "Democrat" at all.

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So went the Chicago convention for four nights, up to and including all 66 minutes of the president's workmanlike but fundamentally anti-political acceptance speech. Americans are now asked to choose Clinton in November as they might choose a pair of designer sneakers. They should *be* like Bill; they need not think like him or act in support of Democratic ideas.

Those few convention speeches that briefly suggested a flicker of passion for the party and its liberalism already look like exercises in death-haunted, rearguard spin. Jesse Jackson's argument in behalf of Clinton's reelection, for example: "Well, what is the alternative?"

No major convention speaker aggressively proposed the restoration of a Democratic congressional majority that might make possible some theoretically ambitious Clintonite politics. "That's not the basis of his appeal to the American people," the president's press secretary acknowledged the day of his speech. In that speech, Clinton all but wrote off his party's chance to retake Congress in November. As long as he is president, he promised, "I will never allow the Republican leadership to use the blackmail threat . . ." And so on. Vice President Gore repeatedly vowed that he and Clinton won't let "them" succeed. Both men clearly expect "them," Republicans in a congressional majority, to return in January as convenient foils.

Foils for what? The second term Clinton is now forecasting is poll-driven vote-bait, not a determined bid for history. If he wins, he will devote himself to a series of eensie-weensie tax credits and a mind-numbingly long list of on-the-cheap federal solutions to problems most Americans probably aren't aware they even have. He will march in place against the Republican party. The country will move a few inches here or there for four long years.

And the Democrats, they told us with unusual unanimity in Chicago, will be satisfied with that. The world's oldest political party is a disgraceful husk of its former self. On purpose. Dick Morris has been whisked from view. But he is still there, dominating everything, in mind and spirit. There is nothing else.

—David Tell, for the Editors

THE MIKE DOUGLAS DEMOCRATS

by John Podhoretz

Chicago

IF THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION'S endless parade of America's most wounded was Oprah Winfrey for conservatives, the Democratic convention was Mike Douglas for liberals. You remember Mike Douglas, surely, the host of *The Mike Douglas Show*, a daily afternoon variety program of the 1960s and '70s. It was a great favorite of pre-liberated stay-at-home women and retirees everywhere.

Last week's gathering in Chicago was a six-hour-a-day *Mike Douglas Show*, interrupted not by commercials for Geritol and DentuCreme but by testimonials to the Democratic party and its candidates. There was lots of audience participation, most famously a daily clinic in the arm-folding dance craze called the Macarena. When delegates weren't folding and unfolding their arms, they were swaying back and forth to recorded versions of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A.," the Village People's "YMCA," Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings," and Chicago's "Only the Beginning." There were film clips to entertain them: gauzy tributes to Clinton and Gore, a goopy roll call of administration officials killed in the line of duty, and a fast-paced video promotion of the city of Chicago that ran twice in the convention's four days.

The eclectic and amazingly long list of live-and-in-person performers was comparable to what you would have gotten by watching *The Mike Douglas Show* over the course of a week:

"On the show this week we have Aretha Franklin! Country-music sensation Billy Ray Cyrus! Opera grande dame Jessye Norman! Saxophonist Kenny G! Singer-trumpeter Phil Driscoll! Bluegrass legend Emmylou Harris! Retired baseball superstar Ernie Banks and legendary baseball announcer Harry Caray, who'll lead the delegates in a stirring rendition of 'Take Me Out to the Ball Game'! The cast of that hit review *Forever Plaid* will be with us! And, for a special treat, the cast of the Pulitzer-prize-winning Broadway musical *Rent* will perform the show-stopping 'Seasons of Love'!"

"Seasons of Love" was scheduled to air in prime-time on the convention's first night (and would have if things had run as smoothly as they did for the Republicans in San Diego). By booking *Rent* and giving it such a choice slot, convention organizers evoked another aspect of *The Mike Douglas Show*: the fact that while it was designed to appeal to the most middle of middle-American audiences, it often featured entertainment of the most decidedly anti-bourgeois nature.

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It was routine for this plain-vanilla variety program to feature guest appearances by hilariously inapposite stars. John Lennon served as Mike's sidekick for an entire week in the early 1970s; David Bowie did too, a few years after. I remember watching Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane singing the drug anthem "White Rabbit" to a typical Douglas studio audience—Philadelphians with lots of hair spray. (The Douglas show was taped in Philly. Go figure.)

If America were to think that *Rent* represented the Democratic party—and that would not entirely be a crazy thing to think, considering the fact that the show got a five-minute free commercial from the party—Bob Dole would win 70 percent of the vote and Republicans would gain a hundred seats in the House and 25 in the Senate. For *Rent* is a salute to commies, druggies, pornographers, admitted sexual deviants—people who, to put it mildly, don't work hard and don't play by the rules. They include the following characters:

Angel, a drag queen who dies of AIDS;

Angel's lover **Tom**, a one-time Marxist professor who is now homeless;

Roger, an ex-junkie with AIDS who lives as a squatter;

Roger's girlfriend **Mimi**, an HIV-positive teenager who dances in an S&M club;

Mark, a straight nerdy Jewish filmmaker;

Mark's ex-girlfriend **Maureen**, who has just left him for another woman.

This isn't mere lifestyle liberalism; it's the most radical aspects of the '60s counterculture transposed to the '90s. If there is one thing the characters in *Rent* share, it is a loathing for middle-class life. Indeed, *Rent*'s theme is the encroachment of a vapid middle-class life upon these grave and wondrous souls who are living a bohemian downtown existence. That encroachment is represented by a real-estate developer to whom Roger and Mark refuse to proffer the title emolument, an act of civil disobedience celebrated in the opening number: "We're not gonna pay/We're not gonna pay/We're not gonna pay/Last year's rent, this year's rent, next year's rent!" Not very New Democrat, if you ask me.

Another show-stopper, "La Vie Bohème," is a rhythmic recitation of a heroic left-wing pantheon, from Pablo Neruda to Frantz Fanon. The impossible dream these characters dream is not having a good job at good wages, or feeding and educating their children, but opening a restaurant in chi-chi Santa Fe.

Not for nothing did *New York Times* theater critic Ben Brantley describe *Rent* as *Hair* for the '90s. It is, therefore, quite amazing that convention major-domos Don Fowler and Chris Dodd allowed it to receive the imprimatur of a Democratic party on a years-long mission to convince middle America that it is not the leftist, countercultural, homeless-loving, anti-bourgeois force it seemed to be at the San Francisco convention in 1984. For if someone had recommended the convention stage a number from *Hair* (which was being revived in Chicago last week, by the way), Fowler and Dodd would have taken turns firing the guy. *Rent* is another matter altogether. It may be about gay, drug-using AIDS patients, but it has been granted cultural gravitas because it was awarded a Pulitzer this year—and because its original-cast album is being brought out by billionaire David Geffen, one of the most important Democratic moneymen.

The Democratic party may be in retreat from the politics of the '60s counterculture, but not from the counterculture itself. There is no *counter*culture anymore; there's only one big pop culture slopping all over itself.

The Macarena, Kenny G, and *Rent* are all part of the same goo—a goo that softens their edges and makes them fit for mass consumption. That process was at work 20 years ago, when *The Mike Douglas Show* turned hippie America-hating misfits into cheerful sidekicks who helped with cooking demonstrations. As both conventions showed, that same ooze now drips over on American politics and washes it clean of meaning in exactly the same way. ♦

THE MACARENA DEMOCRATS

by David Brooks

Chicago

THEY SAY A PERSON IS NEVER SO ELATED as he is after someone has tried to kill him and missed. No wonder the Democrats were so happy in Chicago, given the scare of 1994. They're not especially happy about Clinton. They're not especially happy that the era of big government is over. But they are happy to be alive, and winning. "I couldn't be happier," party chairman Don Fowler exulted. "I can't imagine how I could be happier!"

The floor of the Democratic convention was just about the most gleeful place on earth. Throughout the

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convention, delegates were greeting each other with causeless laughter and odd giggles. These donkeys were happiest doing the Macarena every night. They were happy singing along with "Working for a Living" and "Amazing Grace." They were in raptures at each church choir that came to belt out at them.

The Democrats can't imagine how they can lose this time. The gay and lesbian activists were happy. The union workers were happy (even though they were supposed to be mad at Firestone and a host of other companies). The teachers were happy (even though they were wearing buttons that read "Mad and Mobilized").

They're saps, all of them. These overwhelmingly liberal delegates were being snookered. Ideologically, the delegate profile hasn't changed since the bad old liberal heyday. But while they were butt-bouncing in their chairs to the dozens of musical groups that were thrown at them, their party was being quietly hijacked.

There was lots of pablum and heart-tugging during the week, but the crucial event, as far as the future of the Democratic party was concerned, came on Tuesday night with the speeches of Mario Cuomo and Jesse Jackson. That's when the two leading spokesmen of American liberalism validated Bill Clinton's effort to move the Democrats away from liberalism. The delegates thought they were listening to stirring calls from liberal champions, but they were actually watching liberals who had become complicit in their own renunciation.

Mario Cuomo was the public rubber stamp for the transition from the San Francisco Democrats of 1984, when he was the dominant spokesman for left-liberalism, to the Chicago Democrats of 1996. Yes, Cuomo. He admitted that the San Francisco Democrats had "slighted the middle class." And he celebrated Bill Clinton for his efforts to reconnect with that class. He praised the balanced budget, putting more cops on the street, and other formerly Republican priorities. Mario Cuomo praised Bill Clinton for moving the party away from Mario Cuomo.

Jackson's address was by far the convention's most historically rooted and substantive, and its most unapologetically liberal. But what mattered was not its rhetoric. What mattered was that by appearing, and by endorsing Bill Clinton, Jackson signaled his approval of Bill Clinton and his effort to modernize their party. Like Cuomo, he acknowledged implicitly the point Barney Frank acknowledged explicitly, that Bill Clinton—this one man and this one man alone—is the party's only hope.

The Democrats used to talk about the poor, and more recently the homeless. But there was hardly a single word spoken about homelessness at this convention. Instead, today's conventions project compassion for the disabled. After all, disability is so much *neater* as a political issue than poverty. Convention disability stories always seem to have uplifting endings. But poverty is stubborn. And the disabled speakers at conventions are always so middle class (and so more comfortable for the suburban white married women who are the main target of these shows).

The Democratic party no longer defines itself by its approach to the poor. Under Clinton, it defines itself by how it responds to the anxieties of the middle class. Clinton signed the welfare-reform bill, and his party went along, because the views of the white middle class take priority over the concerns of the underclass and the liberal social policy mavens.

A liberal thinker from California told me that the psychological scars from Clinton's signing the welfare bill are not to be underestimated. It was, he said, comparable to what happened when the Communists stopped believing in communism. They went on being Communists because that is what they were. But somewhere deep inside, they knew they were not the future. The most remarkable Democratic story of the year is that no liberal rose during the primary season to challenge Clinton, to stand up for liberal ideas. The second most remarkable is that Clinton ended the most basic government entitlement, and a few weeks later, 3,400 liberal delegates cheered him on.

Many on the right, Republican and Democrat alike, are already saying that this convention's centrist triumphalism is only an election year gambit. Don't you believe it. Sure, there are pockets of liberalism, represented by members of Congress, state legislatures, and the state delegations (some of which are drifting further left). But there are other, more centrist pockets—in the White House, in governor's mansions, and in city halls. When the two actually face each other, the centrists usually win, even with the Left's superior grass roots. Not only is the Left psychologically undermined, it's out of touch with the *Zeitgeist* and its policy ideas are wildly unrealistic: The AFL-CIO is still dreaming of unionized public works programs to cure unemployment.

The Democratic Leadership Council is in the driver's seat. It held a conference in 1991 called "The New American Choice: Opportunity, Responsibility, Community"—and those three words made up the theme of this convention. More important, the frame of debate has now shifted. Tax hikes are hard to talk about. Balanced budgets are the premise of the left and center of the party.

And so all the policies are small. Even Hillary Clinton is left touting policies so tiny (48 hours in the maternity ward!) that you need a magnifying glass to see them. When even the Democratic party loses faith

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in the great big transformative powers of government and opts instead for federally sponsored 800 numbers and tax breaks for community college, then something is really gone. By the way, the British Labor party was here in Chicago in force, proving that the international trends are unmistakable: Modernization is the central task of those on the political left. And modernization means moving right.

Robert Benchley once wrote a column about how in every news photo of a dramatic event, there is always one person in the photo looking absent-mindedly the other way checking his watch while history is happening over his shoulder. In Chicago, as liberalism was suffering yet another blow, *almost all* the liberal delegates were looking the other way. They had their eyes on the DiamondVision screen, pointing at the big pictures of themselves dancing, and meanwhile their own party and their own leaders were renouncing their creed. They did the Macarena while liberalism burned. ♦

Pro-Life Democrats

by Fred Barnes

Chicago

National chairman Donald Fowler says Democrats "respect the right of people who disagree with us" on abortion. They can still be "good Democrats." That's the official position of the party, anyway. But here's what really happens:

• Rep. Glenn Poshard of Illinois insists pro-life Democrats like himself are routinely punished by House leaders because of anti-abortion votes. On bills with abortion-related amendments, they often vote against the party position. As a result, their party loyalty scores are lower, and they're denied committee assignments and other privileges. "There's no group in Congress that suffers more than pro-life Democrats," Poshard says.

• Pro-lifers—roughly one-fifth of House Democrats—contacted Leon Panetta, President Clinton's chief of staff, and other White House aides in hopes of talking about Clinton's opposition to the ban on partial-birth abortion. Clinton aides didn't call back. The president vetoed the ban.

• Rep. Bart Stupak of Michigan says anti-abortion Democrats are subjected to slurs and snide remarks by pro-choice colleagues. This occurred, for example, after they voted to bar taxpayer-funded abortion and to block partial-birth abortions, according to Stupak.

• Former Pennsylvania governor Bob Casey, the party's leading pro-lifer, was contacted by the White House through an intermediary about possibly addressing the Chicago convention. (He was famously barred from the podium in New York in 1992.) He was interested. On August 16, he wrote to the president asking to speak and "give integrity to the tolerance pledge in the Democratic platform." Neither Clinton nor any aide responded.

That didn't stop Casey from coming to Chicago, where he addressed a rally and gave TV and radio interviews. Despite the party's putative tolerance, Casey called the convention "a very hostile environment." Even so, he said: "I'd rather be in the convention hall than outside."

The environment was so unfriendly that, while pro-choice Democrats defended their position inside the United Center, pro-life Democrats had to meet miles away at the Field Museum. There, several of the speakers talked more about civility and party unity than abortion. Only Stupak addressed the issue frontally. "The enormity of 1.5 million lives' being destroyed every year cannot be overlooked, cannot be forgotten," he said.

Unlike Casey, anti-abortion House members got inside the hall. Some were delegates. And one, Rep. Tony Hall of Ohio, was permitted to utter several pro-life sentences in a brief speech on the second night of the convention.

He and other pro-life Democrats "have felt left out by our party's position on abortion for many years, Hall said. "But this year is different." Now, with a conscience clause on abortion newly added to the platform, "the Democratic party is indeed the party of true inclusion."

But the new platform language doesn't mention that many Democrats are opposed to abortion. It doesn't mention abortion at all. And it certainly doesn't include the phrase "partial-birth abortion," the third-trimester abortion procedure opposed by three-quarters of Americans. It says only that the party "respects the individual conscience of each American on this difficult issue."

To get this small, nebulous concession, Hall, Poshard, Stupak, and others had to lobby both the White House and the Democratic National Committee. They drafted three separate statements, hoping one would be acceptable. Fowler took the three to the platform committee. The result was "a middle ground of the things we gave them," says Poshard.

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What's clear from this episode is that pro-life House Democrats are a timid lot. Yet they act as if they've forced a major change in direction for the party. "It's an acknowledgement we exist," says Stupak. "It's an acknowledgement we're an integral part of the party." Poshard says it is "a step in the right direction."

Casey sees the new language differently. "It's a joke," he says. Pro-life voters "won't be fooled by the tolerance language." And it won't help Clinton mollify pro-life Democratic voters, many of them ethnic Catholics, in battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois.

If Bob Dole and Jack Kemp stress Clinton's partial-birth abortion veto, the president may lose 2 or 3 percent of the vote on that issue alone, says Casey. "That could be very important, if not determinative. Those are the battleground states and that's the battleground constituency."

Might some of these Democrats quit the party over abortion? Perish the thought. "Oh, gosh, no," answers Poshard. How about fighting to make the platform abortion-neutral? "We didn't want to get into a big fight," says Stupak. "We'd come up on the short end of the vote." Even Casey is leery of joining the GOP: "There are just a lot of things on the Republican side I just don't like."

Well, how about prodding Democratic officials to let Casey address the convention? Couldn't do that, say the Democratic pro-lifers. Casey had a "problem," says Poshard. He wanted to speak on abortion, not simply to refer to the subject in passing as Hall did.

In other words, he wanted to do what Kate Michelman of the National Abortion Rights Action League did. She addressed the convention solely on abortion —from the pro-choice side. She described an abortion —her own. "For me, it was a difficult choice," Michelman said. "But it was mine alone to make! Mine!"

Michelman didn't have to lobby, fight, or raise a ruckus to be invited to the podium, either. ♦

We Are Not Family

by William Kristol

Chicago

Mario Cuomo's speech Tuesday night fell far short of his performance in 1984. Its impact on the convention floor was dwarfed by Jesse Jackson's oration a few minutes earlier. But Cuomo, more than any other speaker last week, did succeed in highlighting a fundamental difference—perhaps *the* fundamental difference—between the two political parties:

"The Republicans—this now, this now is the most important idea of all, in all of this welter of sophisticated notions, in all of this quarreling and quibbling politically, keep your eye on the one big idea. The Republicans are the real threat to the most fundamental of all the ideas, the idea that this nation is at its best only when we see ourselves, all of us, as one family. That is the heart of the matter. That has always been the heart of the matter. That will always be the heart of the matter."

Mario Cuomo is right. The claim that the nation is "one family" *is* the heart of the matter. For this claim is the theoretical foundation of the nanny state. And even if Bill Clinton has proclaimed the era of big government to be over, his administration is more committed than ever to an era of busybody government—to the nanny state.

This was made clear last week by both the president and Mrs. Clinton. The president concluded his endless building of an unnecessary "bridge to the 21st century" by reassuring his fellow Americans that "you are part of our family." Two nights before, while reiterating her "it takes a village" trope, Mrs. Clinton drew out the implications of this statement. She acknowledged that "of course, parents, first and foremost, are responsible for their children." But, she went on to say, parents aren't enough "to raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child." That "takes a family. It takes teachers. It takes clergy. It takes business people." And on and on until we get to (and this is underlined in the official text): "it takes a President." And then, three sentences later: "It takes Bill Clinton."

No, it doesn't. Nor does it take Bob Dole. (Nor does it take "business people.")

But this amazing rhetorical progression suggests why the doctrine of the nation-as-family is so pernicious. For if the nation is a family, its citizens are mere children, needing continued guidance, hectoring, and even discipline from . . . Bill and Hillary Clinton. The nation-as-family eviscerates the understanding, fundamental to a free society, that we are self-governing citizens and responsible adults. Instead, we are all dependents; we can't even begin to fend for ourselves, let alone govern ourselves.

How should Republicans oppose the claim that "it takes a village"? It's not enough to respond with the

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soundbite, "It takes a family." Republicans need to explain just why a nation cannot be and should not try to be a family—why this corrupts both the dignity of the nation and the integrity of families.

They need to make the case for the limits of government action; they need to explain how the institutions of civil society are crushed if the space between family and government is obliterated; they need to argue that civic virtue disappears in the nanny state, and they need to show that it can flourish in a self-reliant America.

It's asking a lot of a political party to address so fundamental an issue in a presidential campaign. But the economy is pretty good, the country's at peace, and Bob Dole isn't going to be a better candidate on the hustings than Bill Clinton. To have a chance to win, Republicans need to meet head on the Mario Cuomo/Hillary Clinton challenge and engage the debate on a fundamental level. Doing so would give them a chance to win this election. Just as important, it would lay the groundwork for the more complex task of protecting the institutions of a free society from the attempted encroachments that would surely mark a second Clinton term. ♦

A Bridge Too Far

by Andrew Ferguson

Chicago

"OPPORTUNITY, Responsibility, and Community"—this, Leon Panetta told the press three hours before Bill Clinton spoke at the Chicago convention, was "the general context" of the president's acceptance speech. But, as the world soon discovered, the speech was actually swallowed up in the chaos of policy proposals, sermonettes, and self-addressed valentines that lasted for well over an hour. Something happened to the "general context" on the speech's journey from concept to execution. What happened to it was Bill Clinton.

Even before the president delivered it, Panetta stressed the passage that "sets the stage for what the rest of the speech does." I have room to quote it only in part:

"Let us build a bridge to help parents raise their children, to help young people and adults get the education and training they need, to make citizens feel safer, to help [etc.], to break [etc.], to protect [etc.], and to maintain [etc.]."

If it was not the most important passage of the president's acceptance speech, it was certainly the most representative, for it did, as Panetta said, what the rest of the speech likewise did. It said everything and nothing all at once. In place of a theme, the president offered a metaphor—an amazingly talented bridge that can help, make, break, protect, and maintain, all in a single sentence. The metaphor popped up 22 times, a new metaphor record. While the bridge failed the president as a rhetorical tool, it is a highly useful device for analyzing the speech itself.

The president's bridge is a very crowded bridge. Before the speech was three minutes old, the president was clubbing his listeners with the amazing number of Americans who are in his debt after his three-and-a-half years of service: 4.4 million Americans buying first homes, 15 million families with new tax cuts, 12 million taking family leave, 10 million students getting college loans. And there were others, fewer in number, whose butts he had kicked: the 1.8 million people who were no longer collecting welfare, the "60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers" who can't get handguns under the Brady bill.

Notwithstanding this mob scene, the president's bridge can also be a very lonely place, a place of tortured and solitary experience. This is, after all, the empathic president who wakes up every day to go to work for all of us. When he began to build his bridge, four years ago, his mother was with him; now, he reminded us, apropos of nothing at all, she is dead. The increase in drug use among young people has been difficult, too. "It is very, very painful to me." As for drugs themselves: "I hate them." Let the word go forth: No drugs on the bridge.

The president's bridge is a very wide bridge—a bridge of many lanes, accommodating dozens of wide-load semi-tractor trailers rolling across it side by side, spilling out government initiatives as they travel along.

The lesson of the bridge has two parts. First, "the government can only do so much"; and second, there are no problems that the government can't address. The president offered us a 21st-century government that, if not all-powerful, is at least omni-competent. Does your employer give you hell when you want to take time off to drag your kid to the doctor? On the bridge, the federal government will pass a flex-time law. Do you want the Internet in the classroom? A free degree from a community college? Subsidized child care? A victim's rights constitutional amendment? This is the bridge for you. As the president suc-

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cinctly put it: "We need new laws." Many, many new laws.

Finally, the president's bridge is a very long bridge. It took 66 minutes to cross at the president's languorous, self-involved speed, and before the end was in sight many people in the hall—and presumably at home—were ready to jump off. Cameras scanning the floor caught an embarrassing number of nodding heads, weighty eyelids, slumped shoulders. Even the president seemed briefly to succumb, as his laundry list of accomplishments and proposals grew longer. But as the arc of the bridge dipped near landfall, the president grew energized, for he was able to present one of his favored tropes: the banal observation dressed up as a grand and courageous moral claim. Soldiers serving in the Special Forces, he said hotly—eyes narrowed, finger stabbing the air—"do not deserve to have swastikas painted on their doors."

With the convention drawing to a close and the fall campaign poised to begin, this, then, was the state of the president's message: long and wide, mobbed and lonely, cluttered and confused and in the end banal. No one will blame you if you're reminded of other bridges—a toll bridge, a bridge to nowhere, or that bridge in Brooklyn that people have been selling successfully for a hundred years. ♦

Lying About Medicare

by David Frum

At the Republican convention, Bob Dole pledged to cut income taxes by 15 percent, balance the budget, and leave Social Security and Medicare untouched. Tough-minded reporters believed none of it and shared their skepticism with a national television audience. Two weeks later, the Democrats met in convention and, to put it simply, lied through their teeth about their plans for Medicare. They accused Republicans, in Al Gore's words, of wanting to "give health-insurance rip-off artists a license to change Medicare, to let this program for our seniors wither on the vine. That's why they want to replace Bill Clinton. But we won't let them."

Those remarks are blatantly untrue, both about the Republican plans and about Clinton's own. And the media said . . . nothing.

What Democrats mean by the word "cut," as we all have learned by now, is not what ordinary budget-makers mean. When they accuse Republicans of "cutting" Medicare, they don't mean that the program's costs will actually fall, or even that they will fall after you discount for inflation. What they mean by a "cut" is any change that will deny its constantly expanding number of beneficiaries the same generous level of service that beneficiaries have enjoyed in the past.

But by that definition, Medicare is heading for huge cuts no matter who is elected in 1996. Since discussions about Medicare rapidly degenerate into hideous explosions of statistical megatonnage, I'll keep it simple. Back in 1970, the 20 million Americans over age 65 cost the country $6 billion dollars for Medicare. In 1980, the 25 million Americans over 65 cost the country $32 billion. In 1990, there were 31 million Americans older than 65, and they cost $98 billion.

Anybody see a pattern here?

People who worry about Medicare like to contemplate with a kind of sick horror the fate of the program after 2008, when the baby boomers begin to turn 62. But let's not race that far ahead. Let's look a mere four years into the future, to the year 2000 and the last year of a reelected Clinton's mandate.

President Clinton's last pre-election budget promises to hold the growth in Medicare to a bargain-basement $248 billion by the last fiscal year of his second term. In order to do that, the president is proposing to rely more on managed care, to encourage more intense competition among private providers, and to impose even greater top-down price controls on doctors and hospitals treating Medicare patients.

These are not all bad ideas. But for Medicare patients, many of the consequences of these ideas will feel very much like a "cut": Medicare patients, like the rest of us, very understandably prefer fee-for-service medicine to managed care. Managed-care operators may be able to demonstrate that their customers are just as healthy and live just as long as people who enjoy traditional medical practice; but it's also true that managed-care medicine is less convenient, reassuring, and courteous (no small thing when you're sitting on a table naked except for a smock) than the sort of medicine that Medicare patients are used to.

Transferring Medicare patients to managed care may only "cut" the amenities of medicine. Some of the Clinton administration's other plans go further and will "cut" the actual quality of medicine. For reasons we could debate, the Medicare price controls that the federal government has been imposing since 1983

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have not touched off the innovative search for efficiency that they were supposed to. Instead, doctors and hospitals have coped with the artificial ceiling on their fees either by fiddling with their bills, by cheapening the medicine they offer (by, for instance, substituting generic pacemakers for the latest and safest models), and in some cases by simply ceasing to treat Medicare patients at all.

The Clinton administration describes these "cuts" as byproducts of its zeal to strengthen Medicare. It must do so; otherwise it would have to admit that it, too, is "cutting" Medicare.

Without these "cuts"—if Medicare costs were allowed to rise as fast over the next five years as they have over the past five—the cost of Medicare in Bill Clinton's last year in office would be, not $248 billion, but $302 billion. And if you want to avoid "cutting" other federal health programs, as the president does, you'd better be ready to spend a total of some $100 billion more on health services by 2001 than the president says he plans to.

By now, we're entering a hyper-inflationary stratosphere, in which numbers can lose all meaning. What's $100 billion? Just digits on a page. And the blurrier those digits are, the better they serve President Clinton's interests. And yet they have real impact on the pocketbooks of American taxpayers.

One hundred billion dollars is an extra $500 out of the wallet of every adult American worker in the last year of a Clinton second term. That's on top of the $8,800 per adult that Clinton is already planning to take in 2001—and the $7,100 per adult he took in 1996.

Bob Dole will cut Medicare and Bill Clinton will cut Medicare for the very simple reason that Medicare in its present form cannot be sustained, not even to the end of a second Clinton administration, much less into the baby boomers' retirement years. We all suspect it; a few minutes with government documents proves it. The truth is there to be had by anyone who wants it. Evidently, the networks and the print press don't. ♦

Jesse Jackson and the Truth

by Tucker Carlson

Jesse Jackson came to the end of his prepared speech at the Democratic convention in Chicago last week and decided to keep on talking. Veering from the text, Jackson launched without warning into an account of his father's brushes with racism during the Second World War. In Jackson's telling, Charles Jackson was forced to depart a troop ship from a blacks-only ladder in New York harbor and to sit behind "Nazi war criminals because they were white" on a train trip through the Jim Crow South. Perhaps most poignantly, Jackson told the crowd, upon his return to Greenville, S.C., from the war in Europe, his father found that his next-door neighbor was of all things a German, complete with a heavy accent. "We fought to help free that country," Charles Jackson told his son, his eyes filling with tears, "and now he can go downtown and work and can vote and I can't."

It was without question the most moving part of Jackson's speech. It was also the most baffling, not least because Jackson never explained how his South Carolina neighborhood suddenly had become racially integrated during the few years his father was away at war. Perhaps Jackson will work out that detail in future speeches. The German-next-door story is, after all, a relatively new addition to the Jesse Jackson creation myth. Conspicuously absent from Marshall Frady's recent, definitive biography of Jackson, as well as from all available newspaper and magazine accounts of his life, the story has not yet lost its rough, inconvenient edges. But give it time. Jesse Jackson's past is nothing if not a work in progress.

Jackson's political platform has never been easily distinguishable from his autobiography. One of the experiences Jackson has recounted most often concerns his time at the University of Illinois, which he attended on an athletic scholarship beginning in 1960. As Jackson has repeatedly told it, he left the school at the end of his freshman year when he was informed that blacks were not allowed to be quarterbacks on the football team. It is the perfect Jackson morality tale—at the same time infuriating and hopeful, a measure both of America's racism and of Jackson's personal strength—and it has ended up in a number of biographies and news stories. As recently as this spring, the *New York Times* reported that Jackson departed Illinois "after finding a cold welcome at that mostly white institution."

It's not unlikely that Jackson experienced racism in college, but it probably didn't have anything to do with football. The very year Jackson played for Illinois, the team's quarterback was Mel Meyers, a black man.

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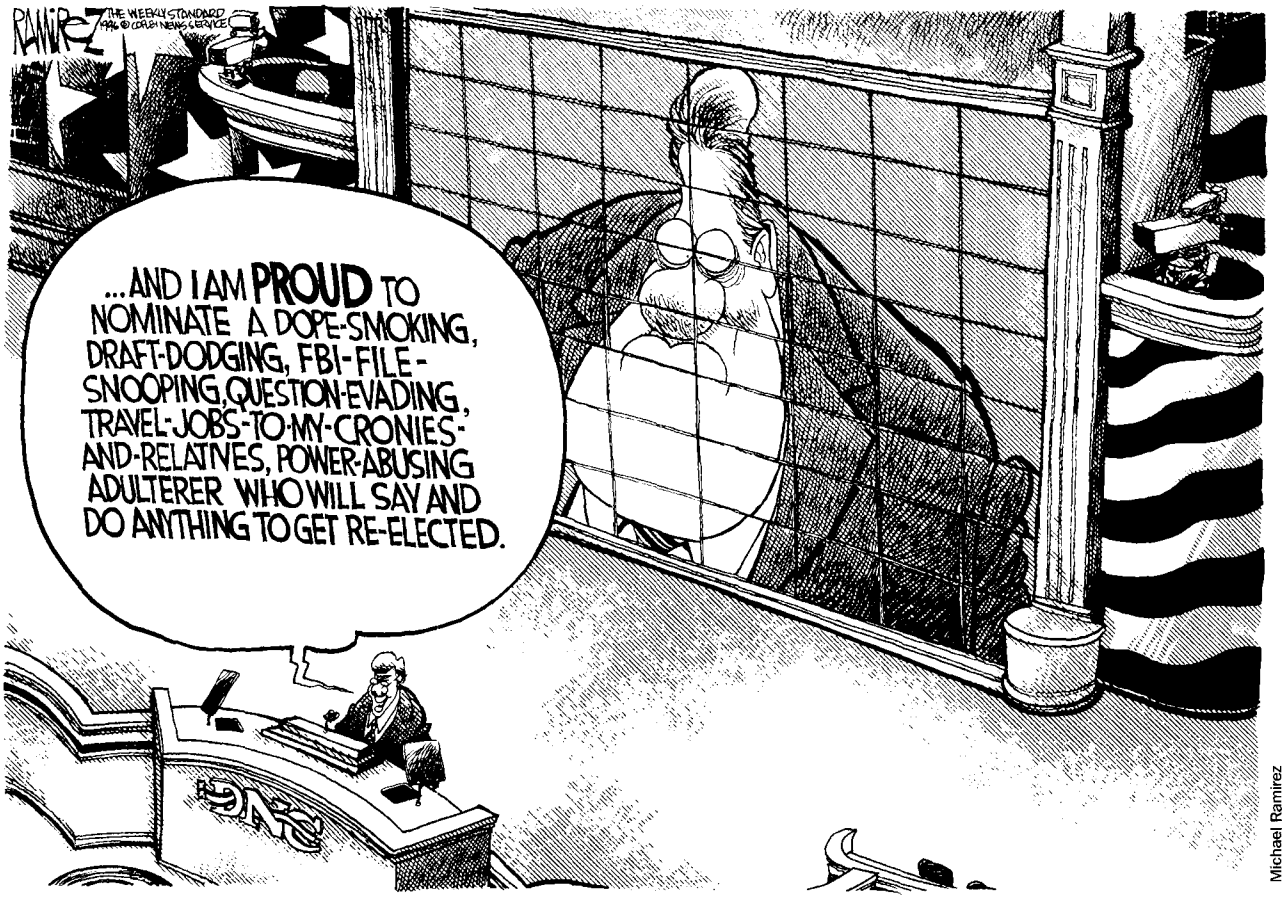
IT TAKES A DONKEY



Michael Ramirez

Instead, Jackson may have left the university for other reasons. Already on academic probation, Jackson departed under a swirl of rumors of his involvement in a plagiarism scandal. Years later, a former acquaintance recalled that at Jackson's request she had retyped an article from *Time* magazine, which he then handed in as his own work.

However Jackson's career at the University of Illinois ended, it's a miracle he ended up there at all, since by his own account he grew up poor—desperately poor. So poor he turned to crime. "I used to run bootleg liquor and buy hot clothes," Jackson told one audience. "I had to steal to survive."

Not quite. Actually, Jackson's parents were solidly middle-class people with good jobs, among the privileged few in black Greenville at the time who could afford indoor plumbing. Jackson's mother was a beautician, his father a postal worker—not, as he has often claimed and as most accounts still report, a maid and a janitor. As for Jackson's comically theatrical claim that he "had to steal to survive" (strangely similar in its hyperbole to Jackson's description of himself on his resumé as a "highly respected world leader"), Charles Jackson remembered it differently. "We were never poor," he explained to Barbara Reynolds, the author of a biography of Jackson. "We've never been on welfare. My family never went hungry a day in their lives."

Jackson is not given to apology, and with few exceptions never expresses regret over the things he says. One of those exceptions took place in New Hampshire during his first race for president, when Jackson apologized to a group of Jewish leaders for anti-Semitic statements he was caught—and for weeks denied—making. (In addition to his infamous "Hymietown" slur, Jackson described aid to Israel as "a glorified form of bribery" and decried the power of "the Jewish element" within the Democratic party.)

The other, less famed exception occurred in 1987. Jackson had long bragged to black audiences that, as a waiter at the Jack Tar Poinsett Hotel in Greenville, he spat in white people's food, presumably as a show of solidarity with oppressed peoples. The story should have disqualified Jackson as a presidential candidate on sanitary grounds alone, but in a conversation with a reporter, he tried to redeem himself. The tale was a lie, he protested. "I never did that, really. And I never should have said it." For once it was hard to know which version of the story to believe. ♦

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SECOND THOUGHTS ON CIVIL SOCIETY

By Gertrude Himmelfarb

I would like to think that it is not just contrariness on my part that makes me wince, these days, on hearing talk of civil society. Liberals and conservatives, communitarians and libertarians, Democrats and Republicans, academics and politicians appeal to civil society as the remedy for our dire condition. They agree upon little else but this, that mediating structures, voluntary associations, families, communities, churches, and workplaces are the corrective to an inordinate individualism and an overweening state.

The ubiquity of the phrase is enough to make it suspect. What can it mean if people of such diverse views can invoke it so enthusiastically? I am as critical as anyone (perhaps more than most) of an individualism that is self-absorbed and self-indulgent, obsessively concerned with the rights, liberties, and choices of the "autonomous" person. And I am no less critical of a state that has usurped the authority of those institutions in civil society which once mitigated that excessive individualism. But I am also wary of civil society used as a rhetorical panacea, as if the mere invocation of the term is a solution to all problems—an easy, painless solution, a happy compromise between two extremes.

CIVIL SOCIETY *IS* IN A SORRY CONDITION. BUT ONE REASON IS THAT SOME OF ITS INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLICITOUS IN FOSTERING THE VERY EVILS THAT CIVIL SOCIETY IS SUPPOSED TO MITIGATE.

Civil society is indeed in a sorry condition. The welfare state is a classic case of the appropriation by government of the functions traditionally performed by families and localities. Neighbors feel no obligation to help one another when they can call upon the government for assistance. Private and religious charities are often little more than conduits of the state for the distribution of public funds (and are obliged to distribute those funds in accord with the requirements fixed by government bureaucrats).

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But it is not only the weakness of civil society that is at fault. Some of the institutions of civil society—private schools and universities, unions and non-profit foundations, civic and cultural organizations—are stronger and more influential than ever. And they have been complicitous in fostering the very evils that civil society is supposed to mitigate. The individualistic ideology of rights and the statist ideology of big government are reflected in the causes that these institutions have promoted: feminism, multiculturalism, affirmative action, political correctness.

Proponents of civil society try to rescue the concept by specifying that the mediating structures they are talking about are not these large, bureaucratic, quasi-public institutions, but small, voluntary, face-to-face groups. But these too are sometimes part of the problem rather than the solution. The family, the most basic and intimate unit of civil society, is hardly a paragon of virtue. For a long time social workers, committed to the family as the natural, proper habitat for the child, made every effort to keep abused children with their abusive parents. Only recently, confronted with cases of the most flagrant cruelty, have some of them been persuaded to remove those children from their "dysfunctional families," as the euphemism has it.

Nor is the face-to-face principle reliable in other instances. It is instructive to recall that a great impetus to the ideology of absolute individual rights and freedom of choice came from small, neighborly, face-to-face groups in the early 1970s—the consciousness-raising sessions that heralded the feminist movement. Today, we have other face-to-face groups—neighborhood gangs, for example—that by this definition qualify as members of civil society but are hardly what the proponents of civil society have in mind.

What is required, then, is not only a restoration of

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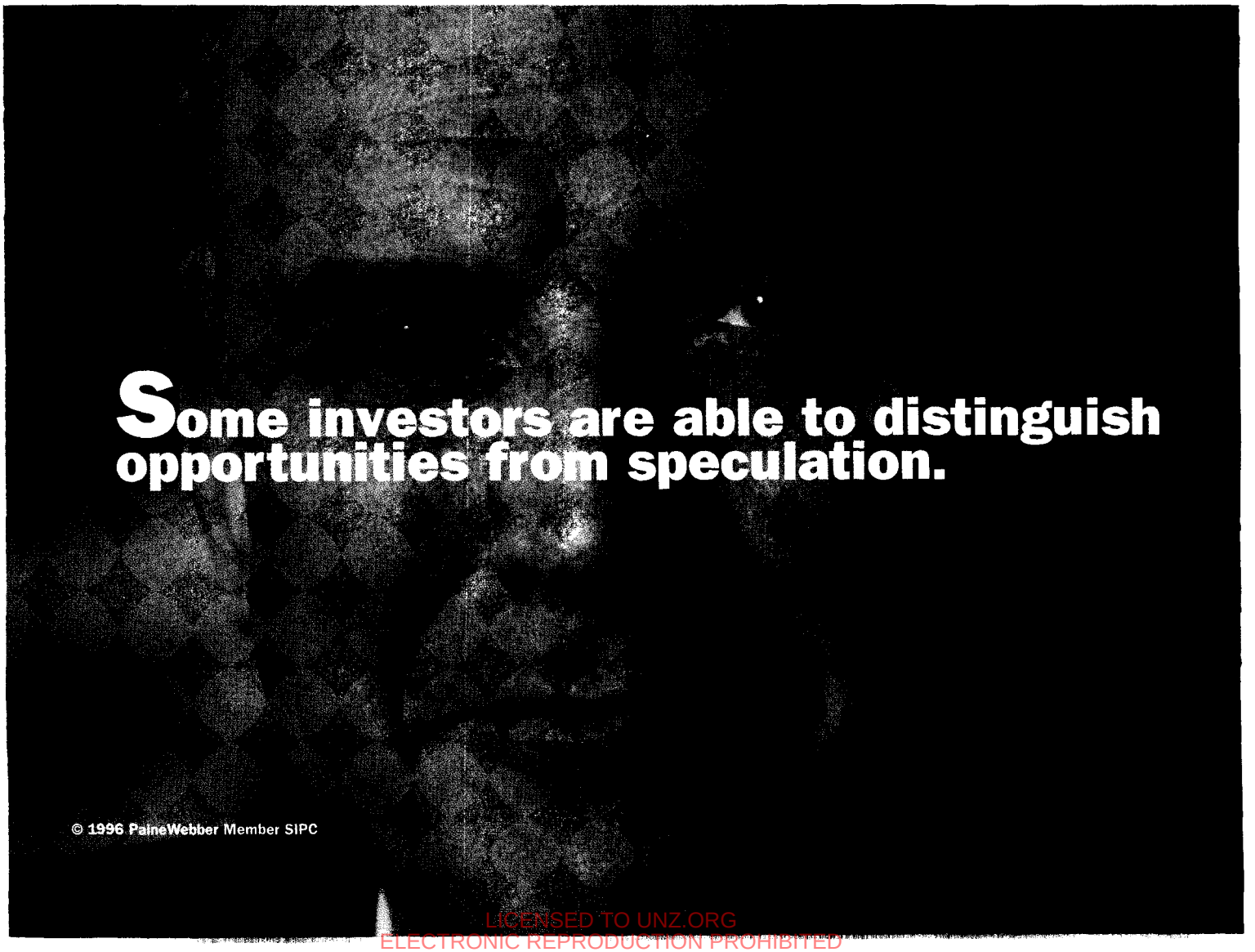
civil society but the far more difficult task of reformation—moral reformation. Even to articulate the problem is difficult, because the language of morality has become suspect. One of the reasons the idea of civil society is so attractive is that it is couched in the language of sociology, which speaks of society in structural and functional terms. In ordinary times, that language is sufficient for purposes of analysis and reform, because underlying those structures and functions is a moral consensus that is taken for granted, values that may not be articulated but that are the bedrock of society. It is only when that consensus is shattered that we are driven to reexamine those values to try to understand why our mediating structures have failed.

The sociological mode is also congenial because it conforms to the relativistic temper of our time. Structures and functions are malleable; they may take one form or another depending upon time, place, and circumstance. Sociologists have assured us that the so-called "breakdown" (in quotation marks) of the family is nothing more than the replacement of the "nuclear," "bourgeois" family by new forms performing the same function: single-parent families, or families consisting of stepparents, grandparents, "cohabitors," or (the latest variant on this theory) "pure relationships" of friends who assume the role and function of kin.

This capacious view of the family has been shaken recently by a substantial body of empirical evidence demonstrating that not all families are structurally and functionally equivalent, that some forms (the fatherless family, most notably) are more inclined than others to be "dysfunctional," contributing to the "social pathology" of crime, violence, illegitimacy, illiteracy, welfare dependency, and the like. Even now, however, we shy away from the language of morality. We speak of the "dysfunctional" family, as if the problem is only functional, or of "social" pathology, as if society is at fault for these ills, or "alternative lifestyles," as if they are true alternatives and mere styles.

It is because we cannot face up to the moral nature



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of the problem that we look for solutions that are at best irrelevant and sometimes counterproductive. Take the efforts being made to force deadbeat fathers to meet their child-support payments. On the face of it, such measures seem eminently fair and sensible. Surely, the father should assume financial responsibility for his children and help the hard-pressed mother stay off the relief rolls. But money itself is not the problem; the real problem is the absence of the father. And that problem may actually be aggravated if these measures succeed, for the absent father will feel that he has met his obligations by making those payments, and the single mother, assured of a regular income, will feel free to enter into the most casual relationships and have children without any commitment of marriage. The cash-nexus, as Marxists used to say, is not a viable basis for society—certainly not a viable basis for the family.

Or compare the best intentioned divorced father today with the typical immigrant father a generation or two ago (or some immigrant fathers today). The divorced father may make a sincere effort to give "quality time" to his children, spend the occasional weekend with them, take them to a ballgame, and attend their school plays. The immigrant father, on the other hand, leaving for work early in the morning and returning late in the evening, had no time to play with his children or share in their activities, and in any case could not have done so because of the cultural gap. Yet he was the better father, one suspects, because he was a permanent, reliable, secure presence in the household—a moral presence whose commitment to his family was unqualified and unproblematic.

When we speak of the breakdown of the family, it is a moral breakdown we are talking about. And when we speak of the restoration of civil society it is a moral restoration we should seek. That restoration may actually take us outside the realm of civil society, for the mediating structures of civil society are themselves dependent on the well-being of the individuals who

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participate in them and of the state that protects and legitimizes them.

It is the individual, after all, who is called upon to be a good mother or father, a considerate neighbor and responsible citizen. The devolution, for example, of welfare to state and local governments is only superficially a structural reform. The objective is the reform of the recipients of welfare by fostering those virtues—work, diligence, self-reliance, self-discipline—that make for more responsible individuals and better members of civil society. Similarly, tax deductions for charitable contributions are meant not only to increase the amount of money donated to charity but also to encourage the virtue of charity, to bring out what the Victorian philosopher T. H. Green called the "best self" of the individual.

If the individual requires "re-moralization," so does the state. It is often said that one cannot legislate morality. Yet we have done just that. Civil rights legislation has succeeded in illegitimizing racist conduct, morally as well as legally. Or a welfare system that subsidizes illegitimacy implicitly legitimizes it. Or a school that distributes condoms legitimizes promiscuity. Or a "no fault" divorce code, by de-stigmatizing divorce, legitimizes it. Or a court decision that disallows the posting of the Ten Commandments in a public school or prayer on a public occasion illegitimizes the public expression of religious beliefs and sentiments.

WE ARE PERMITTED TO ACCLAIM CHARITY, COMPASSION, AND NEIGHBORLINESS AS VIRTUES, BUT NOT TO "STIGMATIZE" ILLEGITIMACY, PROMISCUITY, AND CHRONIC DEPENDENCY AS VICES.

For good or bad, the state is as much the repository and transmitter of values as are the institutions of civil society. Legislation, judicial decisions, administrative regulations, educational requirements, the tax codes are all instruments of legitimization—or illegitimization. The appeal to civil society is a salutary corrective to big government, but should not be taken as an invitation to demean government itself. Especially at this time, when so many traditional institutions are being undermined, we should be wary of the subversion of our political institutions. Moreover, it is just now that we have need of all the resources available to us—public and private, secular and religious, governmental and civic. Edmund Burke's "little platoons" has become the slogan of civil society. But Burke also paid tribute to the state as "a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection." We often have good reason to deplore that partnership, but we cannot deny it or ignore it.

By all means, then, let us restore and reform civil society. But let it be a tougher civil society than that envisaged by many who speak in its name. The recent debate on welfare, suggesting that private charities assume a greater responsibility for relief, may have contributed to a softer view of civil society by identifying it with the "caring" or "nurturing" virtues: compassion, tolerance, generosity, benevolence. But there is another set of virtues traditionally promoted by civil society, the "vigorous" virtues, as Shirley Letwin, the biographer of Lady Thatcher, calls them: adventurousness, energy, independence, courage.

The two are not incompatible. It was Margaret Thatcher, herself a vigorous proponent of those virtues, who revived the idea of "Victorian virtues" (or "Victorian values," as the term was corrupted by reporters), recalling a period when both orders of virtues coexisted happily. The great entrepreneurs of the Victorian age were also the great philanthropists. Self-help and helping others were two sides of the same coin. "We have to use charity," said the secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, "to create the powers of self-help." Samuel Smiles, author of the bestseller *Self-Help*, also wrote a book entitled *Duty* extolling that other Victorian virtue, responsibility to others.

If civil society is to promote the vigorous as well as the nurturing virtues, it has to be vigorous in pursuit of both. That vigor is notably lacking among many of its present advocates, who think that by calling for a restoration of civil society, they are absolved of making those hard choices that will actually restrain the excesses of individualism and statism. For some, civil society has become little more than a surrogate for the state, charged with doing everything the state is currently doing; it is the welfare state "with a human face." Others (sometimes the same people) assure us that civil society need not infringe on individual rights and the freedom of choice; it can curb pornography without resorting to anything like censorship, or criminality without any diminution of civil liberties (or what has come to be regarded as such), or the breakdown of the family without any restrictions on divorce or any prejudice against alternative lifestyles. It is also remarkable how often civil society is invoked without

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any reference to one of its most important institutions, the churches; having driven religion out of the public square, many proponents of civil society would also like to see it removed from that semi-public square known as civil society.

Above all, what is generally lacking in the discussion of civil society is any reference to morality and moral sanctions; instead we are more likely to be warned against any display of "moralism" and "judgmentalism." We are permitted to acclaim charity, compassion, and neighborliness as virtues, but not to "stigmatize" illegitimacy, promiscuity, or chronic dependency as vices. And they may not be stigmatized either by word or deed—by language suggesting that they are discreditable, or policies that deem them unworthy of public support.

Yet this is precisely the function of civil society: to encourage moral behavior and discourage—which is to say, stigmatize—immoral behavior. The mechanisms of approbation and disapprobation are all the more necessary in a liberal society, for the more effective the social sanctions, the less need there is for the legal and penal sanctions of the state. If the advocates of civil society are serious in their desire to mediate between the individual and the state, they have to endow civil society with the authority to do so. They have to be as candid in censuring vice as they are in applauding virtue. They have to restore not only the institutions of civil society but the force of social and moral suasion. Only then will civil society be what Tocqueville took it to be: the essential constituent of a liberal and democratic society. ♦

The Gospel According to Tom Hayden

By Vincent Carroll

In retrospect, it was merely a matter of time before Tom Hayden would finally proclaim himself an Indian. For a quarter century or more, Indians have been Hayden's favorite people—equaled in his affections for only a few years by the Communist Vietnamese. But whereas Communist imperfections belatedly caught Hayden's eye, long after the last blood of American troops had stained Indochinese soil, the romance of Indians still retains its hold on the California state senator, delegate to last week's Democratic convention, and onetime leader of the New Left.

Best of all, Hayden is now one of them. His transformation is recounted in his new book, *The Lost Gospel of the Earth* (Sierra Club Books, 267 pages, $22), a work of environmental theology that will solidify Hayden's reputation as his generation's most nimble spokesman for whatever leftist enthusiasm dominates the day.

Hayden clears the ground for his new identity with a necessary stipulation: "The search for the lost gospel," he announces, involves "a deeper exploration of our common identity in a native past. No one is purely settler, or purely native. We are all indigenous somewhere." Although born and raised mainly in Michigan, Hayden seems to believe he is "indigenous" to Ireland and that his Irish ancestors "could be called the Indians of Europe." For one thing, the Irish once lived in "kinship-based clans similar to tribes in America." For another, not only had these Irish once "communicated with spirits in the land and sea," but they would later develop "the 'greenest' church in Europe."

Hayden first tried to enter Ireland in the late 60s, but his reputation preceded him and he was summarily expelled. "I wonder today," he muses, "if the experience of expulsion from our own ethnic gardens doesn't reverberate as an unhealed pain in our own memories." By way of answering he notes that in 1973, he and Jane Fonda named their son Garity, his mother's maiden name, as "a step in the recovery of memory and healing of loss."

"It also was then," he now reveals, "that I began to understand how an Indian in America must feel."

Such dreadful sanctimony and self-absorption have been the hallmarks of Hayden's long public

Vincent Carroll last wrote for The Weekly Standard *about the Worldwatch Institute.*

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career, along with an unchecked sentimentality. Thirty years ago Hayden fell head over heels for a Third World police state; today his knees go weak at the mere mention of any people that supposedly worships trees. Hayden must feel like an Indian because Indians, above all others, embody for him the lost nature mysticism that he believes is necessary to save the world. Once upon a time, it was American imperialism that threatened human existence. Now the danger is every major organized religion on earth. They all, every one, fail to put nature on the pedestal it deserves.

The Judeo-Christian tradition, in particular, has a lot of explaining to do. For openers, "the Ten Commandments prohibit adultery but not pollution, demand that we honor our parents but not the earth." And was there ever a more disturbing call to human dominion over nature ("a license to plunder the natural world") than the traditional interpretation of Genesis?

Much of this has been said before, of course, most notably by Lynn White, who in a 1967 article for *Science* magazine blamed "our ecological crisis" on "the victory of Christianity over paganism." Yet Hayden has no illusions about the resilience of the biblical tradition, and a fundamentalist interpretation at that. As recently as 1991, he recounts, a Gallup poll found that nearly half of all Americans adhere to the view that man was created "pretty much in his present form at one time in the last 10,000 years." If Genesis cannot be cast aside, Hayden reasons, it must "be reinterpreted in a greener way," along with the whole of Judeo-Christian theology—which task, in a nutshell, Hayden sets out to do, while helpfully throwing in a chapter on how to improve Buddhism, too.

STRIP CHRISTIANITY OF MONOTHEISM, HIERARCHY, AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT DOESN'T REMOTELY RESEMBLE CHRISTIANITY.

Yet the endeavor is hopeless, and one senses the author knows it as well as anyone. Strip Christianity of monotheism, hierarchy, and the immortality of the individual human soul, put human beings on the same moral plane as a grasshopper or a porcupine, and what you have left may be agreeable to a nature mystic, but it doesn't remotely resemble Christianity. If "nature mysticism is the de facto religion of native people everywhere," as Hayden argues, what would distinguish its Christian variant, other than a few apparently expendable biblical stories? Hayden never really bothers to explain.

Reading *The Lost Gospel*, one continuously marvels that a man of Hayden's superficiality has played such a prominent role in left-wing political thought for more than 30 years. Indeed, Hayden fails to grapple seriously with any of the premises he lays down. He rails against technology and what technology has wrought, and seems disturbed by the culture of scientific inquiry itself ("Where nature becomes an object of intellectual conquest, physical conquest is not far behind"). Yet he also blandly insists he is not "advocating the wholesale rejection of science." He repeatedly mocks the idea that humans merit special consideration compared with other creatures; he even praises children because they do not "distinguish a moral hierarchy between trees, flowers, animals, and human beings" (a dubious notion, but never mind). Yet he never bothers to explore how such a view would translate into practical behavior.

If all nature is equally sacred, as he repeatedly maintains, need we lament the death of a trout as much as that of a child? Presumably not, one supposes, yet isn't a moral hierarchy implicit in that distinction? Or perhaps Hayden disagrees. He does describe how he gave up fishing because he "had looked into the eyes of too many fish and experienced feelings there." So, is fishing wrong? Is eating fish wrong? A score of questions spring to mind, all unanswered. For that matter, under what circumstances are we permitted to cut down one of those trees that we are all expected to revere?

Hayden is mainly posturing, of course. What he really wants is what he has always wanted: to assert moral superiority over the rest of us. It is his single, lifelong compulsion, and he does it today through the same rhetorical tricks he employed a full generation ago. Even Hayden has admitted, in his 1988 memoir *Reunion*, that he was "very wrong in certain of my judgments" regarding the Vietnamese. To wit: He "turned the Vietnamese into caricatures of revolutionaries," all kind, selfless, and wise. Yet Hayden apparently learned nothing from this rare moment of self-awareness. His descriptions of Indian virtue and wisdom in *The Lost Gospel* are no less monochromatic than his most gullible exhortations on behalf of the Viet Cong—if anything, they are more so. Presumably Hayden never put fictional statements in the mouth of a Vietnamese. Yet in *The Lost Gospel*, he quotes Chief Seattle's environmental manifesto even though he knows, and admits, that "the technical accuracy of Seattle's speech has been rightly

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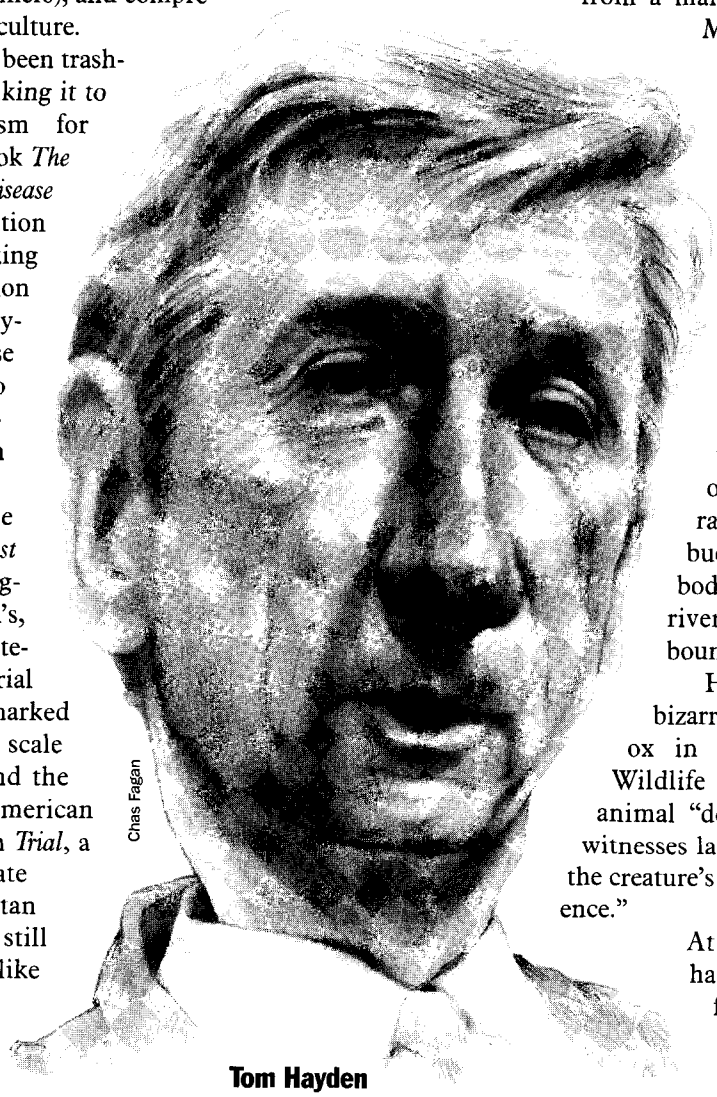
challenged." Challenged is one way to put it. The manifesto was written in 1970 by a screenwriter named Ted Perry.

Otherwise, the excesses of *The Lost Gospel* parallel the excesses of his earlier work almost stride for stride. There are the same disdain for mainstream liberalism (even Al Gore and Bruce Babbitt come under mild fire for failing to uphold an "absolute standard" for the rights of nature), contempt for his suburban American roots, demonizing of political opponents (who are now described as sinners), and comprehensive rejection of his culture.

Indeed, Hayden has been trashing Christianity and linking it to a predatory capitalism for decades. In his 1972 book *The Love of Possessions Is a Disease With Them* (it's a quotation from Sitting Bull, marking the author's early fixation on native genius), Hayden sneers at Vietnamese Catholics as "traitors to their people" who richly deserved their often brutal fate.

The apocalyptic tone that afflicts *The Lost Gospel* has been a longtime staple of Hayden's, too. He was once absolutely convinced that the trial of the Chicago Seven marked "the beginning of full scale political repression" and the waning days of the American "empire." He exulted in *Trial*, a 1970 tract, that "private property and puritan morality, while still endorsed by dinosaurs like the Nixon family," would soon be obsolete. Today his hyperbole, equally puerile, is offered on behalf of the environment. He writes in all seriousness, for example, that "fifty thousand Americans die in car accidents every year, and many thousands more from the tobacco, alcohol, and drugs that we take to steady our nerves. All these disorders of the modern world arise from our striving against nature."


Chas Fagan

Tom Hayden

All these disorders? Will none of us die in car accidents when paganism reigns supreme?

Just as he did 30 years ago, Hayden yearns incoherently for a decentralized village culture "connected to the land." His would be a village culture sustained, however, by only the vaguest sort of private property rights. Although Hayden no longer calls for the abolition of private property, the right to own land still leaves him uneasy; how can any piece of this planet belong to us, after all, when we are merely "sojourners upon God's good earth"? All this bucolic hokum from a man who resides in Santa Monica.

If *The Lost Gospel* adds anything new to the Hayden oeuvre, it would seem to be a large dose of weirdness. Here is Hayden describing a transcendental moment he experienced while wading in a stream: "One day I even felt the water inside me while being in the water outside me. The stream ran through me; I was buoyed by water within my body that swelled to join the river through the porous boundary of myself."

He relates an equally bizarre encounter with a musk ox in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge. During it, the animal "delivered a message, all witnesses later agreed," based upon the creature's "3 million years' experience."

At 56, it seems, Hayden has come a long long way from his lessons at the Shrine of the Little Flower School. But rest assured, he is not through. He notes approvingly, for example, that Thoreau's last words are said to have been "moose" and "Indians." What will Hayden's be, one wonders? What enthusiasm will have turned his head 20 years from now?

One thing is certain: It will fit the reigning left-wing *Zeitgeist*. For Tom Hayden is nothing if not a man of the herd. ♦

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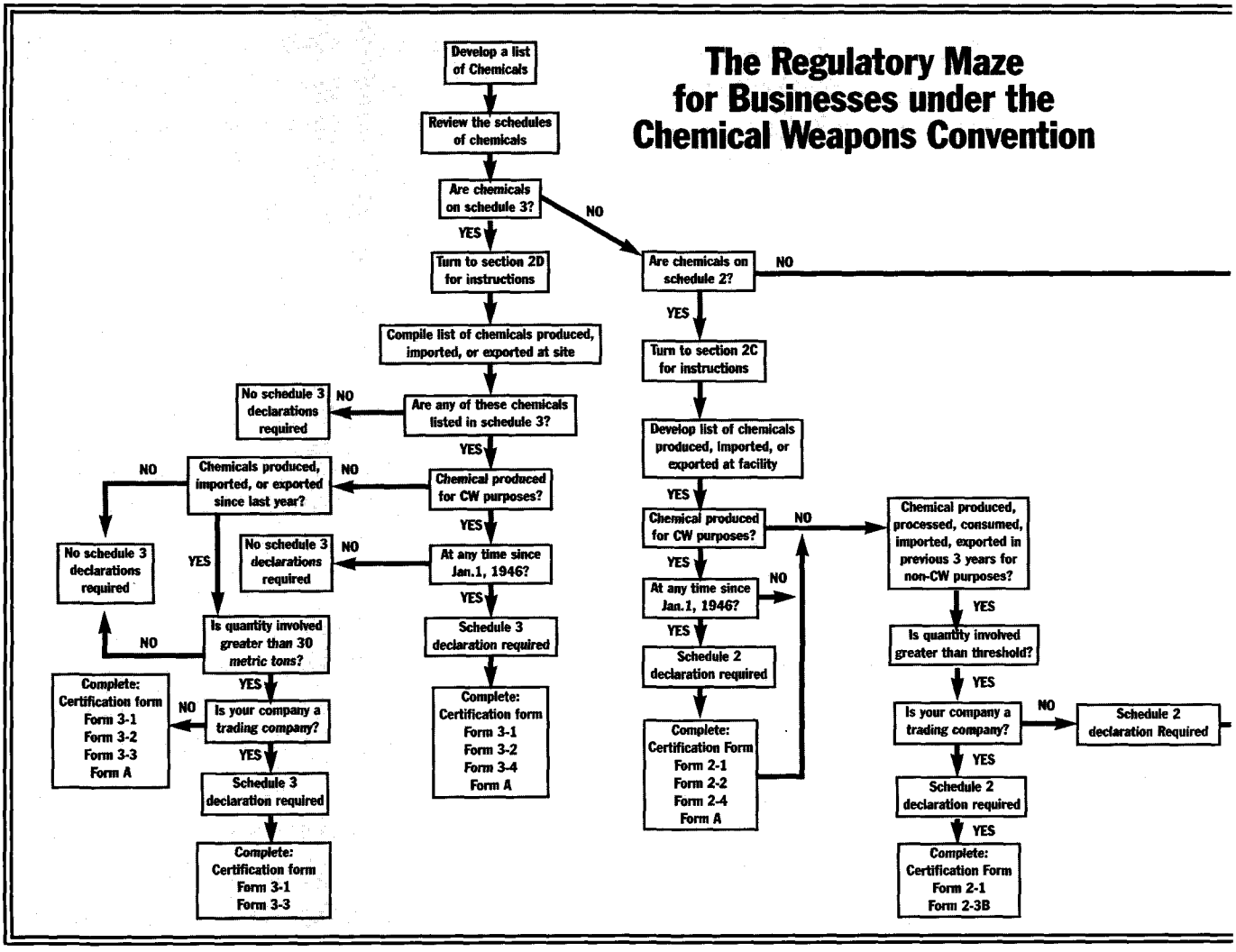
Chemical Warfare and How Not to Fight It

By Matthew Rees

Terrorism has been quietly emerging as an issue in the race between Bob Dole and Bill Clinton. Dole portrays the president as insufficiently wary of the world's rogue states. Soon, though, Clinton will have handy ammunition—when the Senate approves a chemical weapons treaty endorsed by the administration and opposed by many Republicans.

On or before September 14, the Senate will consider the Chemical Weapons Convention, which bans production, possession, and use of chemical weapons. Superficially uncontroversial, the treaty has drawn little attention from the media and senators. But the White House isn't taking any chances. In recent weeks, a team of 15 mid-level administration officials has been briefing Senate Republican staffers on the virtues of the treaty. And in a speech on August 5, President Clinton said the convention would make it "much more difficult for terrorists to acquire chemical weapons." To underline the point, he noted that the Japanese parliament ratified the treaty soon after last



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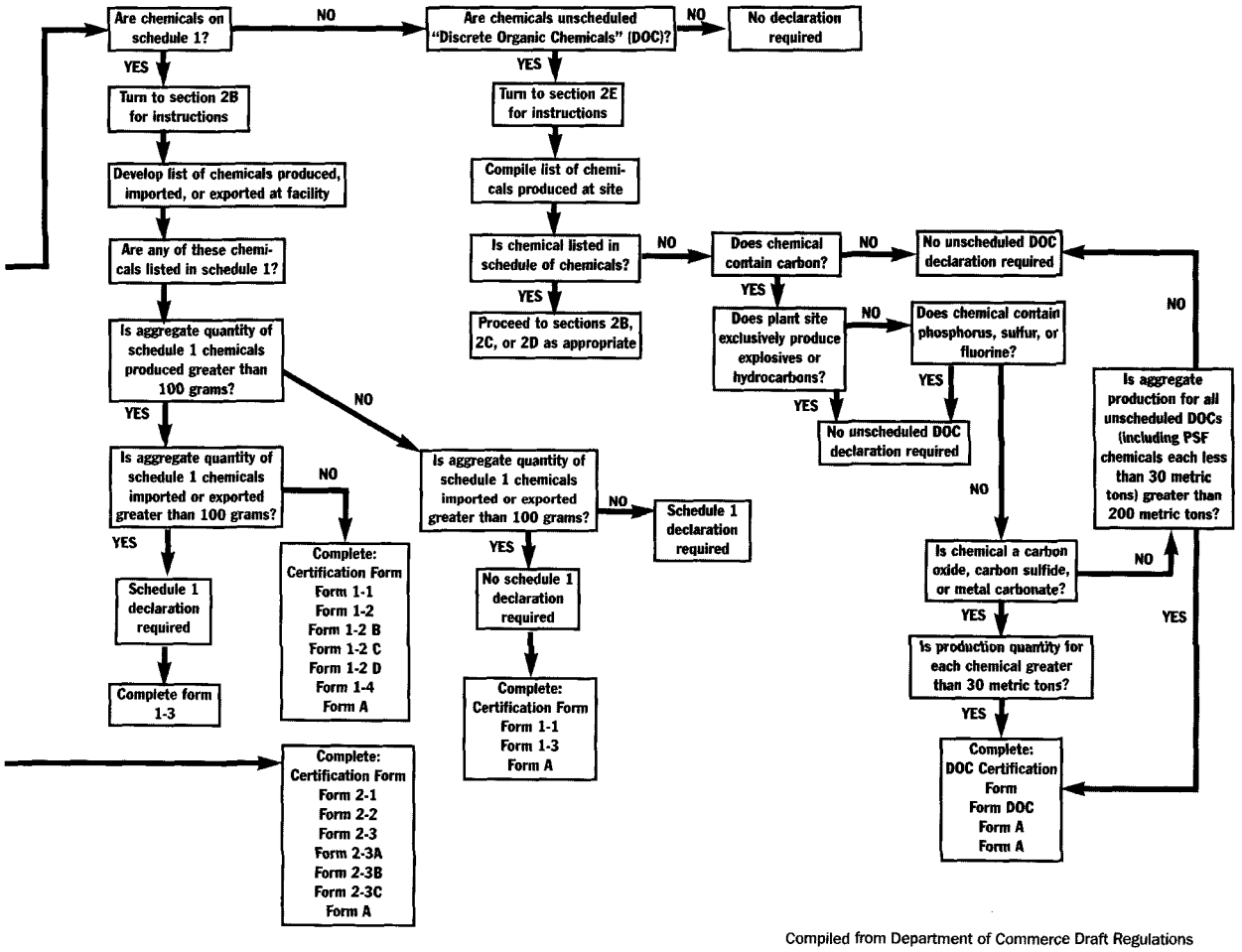
year's deadly sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway.

That argument, while emotionally appealing, is bogus. Secretary of State Warren Christopher testified in April that the treaty was not designed to deal with the terrorist threat. Indeed, the Chemical Weapons Convention could not have prevented the Tokyo subway attack, since the nerve gas used there was easily manufactured from commercial chemicals. This points to another problem: verification. In June 1994, CIA director James Woolsey testified that he did not have "high confidence in our ability to detect noncompliance, especially on a small scale."

Once potential violations are spotted, moreover, the convention gives a country five days to prepare for inspection by an international team. In recent years Iraq, with much less than five days' notice, has still managed to hide its chemical agents. Opponents also point out that many of the countries suspected of possessing chemical weapons—Syria, Libya, Iraq, North Korea—show no intention of signing the measure. Besides, signing doesn't guarantee compliance—witness Iraq's and North Korea's violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

And there are other drawbacks to setting up an infrastructure to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. First, a strict interpretation of the treaty would bar even such uses of chemical weapons as tear gas in evacuations of personnel. And the pact would have a sweeping effect on U.S. businesses. Clinton's own Arms Control and Disarmament Agency says 3,000 American companies would probably have to file detailed reports with the Commerce Department on their chemical-producing agents (see chart). Companies both small and large, including such unlikely suspects as Quaker Oats and the Safeway grocery chain, would be financially burdened by the reporting requirements. And it might not end there. The treaty gives international inspectors expansive powers to



Compiled from Department of Commerce Draft Regulations

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investigate government *and* private facilities without acquiring search warrants from U.S. courts. This raises constitutional concerns, insists Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy. And the treaty lacks protections for businesses' proprietary information.

All that said, it is unlikely more than 25 senators will oppose the treaty (34 are needed to defeat it). No Democrat is expected to vote no, and the pro-treaty group is led by Indiana Republican Richard Lugar, armed with a letter endorsing the measure from George Bush. The problem for the opponents is bumper-sticker politics: Should they defeat the treaty, they will be branded extremists, unwilling to protect the world from chemical weapons. (It doesn't help that the Pentagon recently admitted that troops in the Gulf war may have been exposed to chemical weapons.) Not surprisingly, Dole has been quiet on the issue.

So why must the treaty be considered at all just seven weeks before the election? Because the parties in the Senate reached an agreement to consider it. In the waning days of his administration, George Bush signed the treaty. Neither Clinton nor the Democrats in charge of the Senate opted to push for approval in 1993 or 1994.

Once the Senate was controlled by the GOP, however, they began to press their Republican colleagues to consider the measure. Dole never scheduled a vote, but in late June, in Trent Lott's first month as majority leader, Senate Democrats offered him a deal: We won't filibuster defense legislation if you schedule a vote on the chemical weapons treaty before November. Lott's Republican troops were divided. A group of conservatives, including Jesse Helms, Jon Kyl, and Bob Smith, opposed the deal. Others, like John McCain, John Warner, and Strom Thurmond, didn't want the defense bill to go down in flames.

Lott placated both sides by agreeing to consider the treaty by September 14, with the understanding that he and other Senate GOP leaders would work to defeat it. They would also press the White House to provide documentation on Russia's compliance with a 1990 chemical-weapons-destruction agreement. Helms believed the documents would show Russia's failure to honor the agreement, thus bolstering the case against trusting Russia—the country with the largest chemical weapons arsenal—to comply with the pending treaty.

The problem is, the White House hasn't provided the documents Senate Republicans are seeking. Kyl, who says he's "totally fed up with the administration's stonewalling," wants to delay the vote, though it's unlikely Lott will agree to this. And even if the documents were provided, there wouldn't be time to rally opposition to the treaty.

This hasn't stopped Helms from mounting a public relations blitz, highlighting the states and businesses most adversely affected by the burdensome compliance provisions. One Senate Republican aide says they're "within striking distance" of rounding up 34 votes against the treaty, but that's probably wishful thinking.

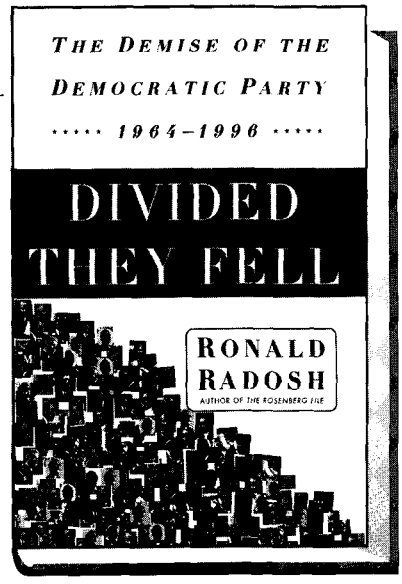
The political reality is that it's infinitely easier to vote for multilateral arms control than against it, particularly when the president is making shameless demagogic use of tragedies like the Olympic bombing and the Tokyo subway attack. Even Kyl concedes that members will be "inclined to take the easy way out." A vote against this treaty opens any senator to the charge of being soft on terrorism. And that's a charge you don't want to be responding to on election eve. ♦

THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IS OVER. IS THE PARTY OVER TOO?

"This trenchant, tightly argued political history of the unraveling of the New Deal-cemented liberal-labor coalition that sustained the Democratic party for decades is sure to be controversial."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Mr. Radosh's narrative of the party's decline is engaging, and his analysis of the reasons for it is compelling."
—*The Wall Street Journal*

"Radosh has written a completely fresh narrative and its corollary, a fresh analysis as well."
—Martin Peretz, *The New Republic*



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"Crazy Books" and the Culture of Victimization

By Christopher Caldwell

A friend who has taught college-level creative writing tells me that whenever he chastises his students for having written something outlandish, or flat, or discordant, they resort to the same disclaimer: *"But that's the way it really happened!"* Which leads him to explain with a sigh that for three centuries, fiction has sought to *impose* order on the events of life, to *arrange* human activity into patterns that render each part purposeful or meaningful or holy, to *convert* life into narrative. But today's young writers are more interested in chronicling their personal experience, asserting their personal identity, or both. This impulse is always present in the writing of fiction, but it is such a marginal aspect of what the best fiction has always done that you want to ask these neophytes why they're writing fiction at all.

The answer is that many of the most talented are not. Not any more. Indeed, young people in their twenties and thirties are writing not first novels these days; they are writing *memoirs*. They are literary works rather than conventional autobiographies because they deal with the mental and emotional stuff that used to be the raw material of novels, rather than with achievements in the public world, of which the authors have typically accumulated very few. That these memoirists are so young should not surprise us: After all, the culture that shaped them has so stressed sex, intoxication, and other forms of self-gratification that it's easy to feel at, say, 27 that the meaningful part of your life is over. No: What's surprising is that these books appear to be gradually *replacing* novels.

But reading through a dozen recently published memoirs, each of which is an effort to portray the the individuality of its author, one is struck by nothing so much as their sameness. Practically all of them feature some combination of identity politics and mental illness. They replace the moral and social concerns of literature with either the chemical concerns of medicine or the sexual casework of Krafft-Ebing or the ethnic determinism of Herbert Spencer.

YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS ARE WRITING NOT FIRST NOVELS BUT MEMOIRS—IN WHICH IDENTITY POLITICS AND MENTAL ILLNESS REPLACE MORAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS.

They fall into two categories. "Race-and-gender books," about being black/Hispanic/Asian/gay at Harvard/Yale/Princeton/Columbia, are so numerous that one must—and so identical that one *can*—ignore them. It is the "crazy books," the confessions of those who are either mentally ill or so maladjusted that their lives take on the patterns of insanity, that concern us here.

Two limpid pools of narcissism set the contemporary boundaries of the "crazy book"—Elizabeth Wurtzel's 1994 depression memoir *Prozac Nation* and Michael Ryan's 1995 sex-addict memoir *Secret Life*. Wurtzel's book has two tracks. The first follows our young author as she copes with depression and the medication she takes for her condition. The second track involves her precocious achievements and her sexual allure:

> I wrote like crazy, at least two or three reported pieces a week, sometimes more. I wrote like my life depended on it, which it kind of did. My editors were mystified by my productivity, thought I was mainlining copy or something. . . . They nominated me for awards from the Texas Newspaper Association and the Dallas Press Club. . . . So they kind of let it slide when I started to crack. . . . When I did arrive at my office, I'd spend most of my time returning personal phone calls or telling the other reporters about the latest man in my life, an ever-changing array of cowboys, restaurateurs, musicians, and college sophomores.

In other words: *What I've accomplished is mine; what I've done wrong is the lithium or the insanity talking.* This suggests that the key feature of the "crazy book" is not the craziness per se. It's that a medical diagnosis or a biochemical problem replaces the moral judgments and decisions that are the traditional purview of the novel.

The core of *Secret Life* is Ryan's struggle with "sex addiction," an "illness" some bluenoses among us might call sexual predation. He traces his addiction to two childhood traumas—having been molested several times over the course of a year as a 5-year-old, and

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having been psychologically "abused" by his alcoholic father.

Ryan lumps the two together as equivalent violations. But it is his molestation that he uses to explain his own lecherous behavior towards his teenage students and various anonymous sex partners. "She was *only one in a long line of students* with whom I reenacted my own sexual abuse, from the other side, as the molester, as if I could escape its unhappy imprinting by being [my molester] and not myself," he says towards the end of the book. As for the sex itself, Ryan's not the one doing it: "I wasn't in a blackout. I was fully conscious the whole time. But I was on automatic pilot, as if my brain were being beamed in from Mars. I knew I was headed for trouble, but there was nothing I could do about it."

Well, if Ryan's got nothing to do with it, then why should we read about *him*? No one doubts that Ryan's traumas are real or permanent, but his all-absolving excuse deprives his memoir of any moral dynamism. It also explains why he decided to examine these issues in a memoir and not a novel. As both *Secret Life* and *Prozac Nation* show, "me-against-my-disease" is a lot simpler a proposition than dealing with characters who *evolve*.

Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story* (Dial Press, 258 pages, $22.95) is this season's bestselling "crazy book." Knapp's dysfunction is treated with the same medical-replaces-moral paradigm that characterizes Wurtzel's and Ryan's books. Like Wurtzel, Knapp is eager to have her cake and eat it: She's a pitiable alcoholic when explaining what a long row she has to hoe, but a perfectly competent member of society when totting up her achievements.

She describes herself as a "high-functioning alcoholic," a term that suggests she might not be an alcoholic at all: It's almost as if she's anointed herself an alcoholic in order to be taken seriously as someone saying something new. Like Wurtzel, Knapp *isn't* dysfunctional. And like Wurtzel, Knapp sometimes seems merely braggadocious. She is basically telling us that she can do all the challenging work of being an intellectual with one hand *tied behind her intellectual back*. Comparing her own reminiscences with those of a lower-middle-class alcoholic friend, she writes: "Her story was a miniseries, an epic drama spanning generations, something that would star Brad Pitt and Julia Ormond. Mine was more along the lines of a John Updike novel, or a short story by John Cheever." Cheever and Updike may have been familiar with Knapp's classy Cambridge upbringing, but their fiction deals with a variety of people going through a variety of experiences.

SHE'S A PITIABLE ALCOHOLIC WHEN EXPLAINING WHAT A LONG ROW SHE HAS TO HOE, BUT A PERFECTLY COMPETENT MEMBER OF SOCIETY WHEN TOTTING UP HER ACHIEVEMENTS.

These new memoirs don't. They focus narrowly, even exclusively, on childhood and the part of young adulthood in which children are still heavily under the influence of their parents. It's as if young Americans today felt that they were most themselves when they were living under parental dominion. Knapp's parents are so obviously kindhearted, if inexpressive, that it feels like a cheap narrative trick when she blames them for giving her a misleading, heartless upbringing: "Growing up, I never heard my parents say 'I love you,' not to us and not to each other. I never heard them fight either. That's something else I picked up as a kid: adults didn't have conflicts, or, if they did, they kept them to themselves, closeting any hints of distress behind *closed doors*." *Anyone who believes* into adulthood that adults don't have conflicts is unlikely to offer us a literary work as rich as even the worst novels, which are *sustained* by conflict.

This desperate desire to blame the adults is what dooms Jill Ciment's *Half a Life* (Crown, 210 pages, $23). The story of a Jewish Canadian immigrant who becomes a "bad girl" in the San Fernando Valley seems oddly promising, considering Ciment holds three archetypal modern occupations—public-opinion pollster, porn model, and "artist" who never actually produces anything. Such a resumé suggests Ciment might have something to tell us about the anomie of the shopping-mall world we live in. But *Half a Life* is not the book it thinks it is. It purports to tell the story of a family never given a chance by its rotten, domineering father. But Ciment seems not to realize that the man she depicts is merely a feckless, nervous, but ultimately quite decent fellow. The real story is that of Ciment's mother, the supposed hero of the book, who uses her rapport with her children to split the family in two and drive Mr. Ciment into a studio apartment, the better to accommodate her desire to hang around in singles bars. Similarly, Wurtzel gets high on cocaine and trashes "my dad, who I really wanted to call just then, if only to remind him that he still owed me my allowance from the four years in high school when I couldn't find him."

The authors typically bear the same relation to their parents that they do to their illnesses: They have problems *because* of these

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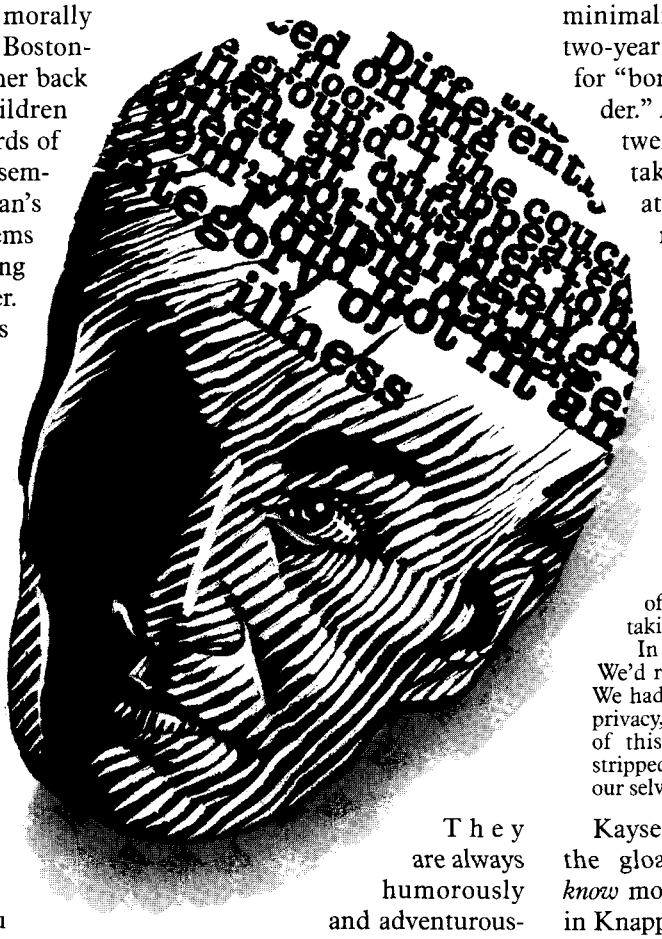
wretched people and accomplishments *despite* them. Only Wurtzel gets at the central moral cop-out here; at one point, she locates the source of her unhappiness in "the scariness of being an adult."

The scariness of being an adult is, in part, the subject of Suzanne E. Berger's *Horizontal Woman* (Houghton Mifflin, 216 pages, $22.95). Despite its teasing title (bachelors, hold on to your wallets!), this is a joyless, morally obtuse tale, the story of a Boston-area poet who throws out her back picking up one of her children and is bedridden for upwards of a year. *Horizontal Woman* resembles Wurtzel's and Ryan's books in that no doctor seems actually able to find anything wrong with Suzanne Berger. But back pain is Berger's ticket to "identity":

> Differently placed on the floor, on the couch, on the ground, I appeared fallen, an outsider to be stared at. Strangely disabled, not suffering from visible damage, I did not fit in any category of illness, or "handicap," and so I was Other. Becoming Other, I could partly experience the reverberations of physical, emotional, and ethnic difference perceived as oddness in our culture, which favors the usual and the robust.

Actually, it's hard to think of a more diametrically *wrong* view of "our culture." At least if you take these books as evidence.

No book is more frequently cited as an antecedent to the new spate of memoirs than Frank Conroy's 1967 coming-of-age narrative *Stop-Time*. *Stop-Time* describes Conroy's travels with a flighty mother and her ne'er-do-well boyfriend, Conroy's passage through several excellent and third-rate high schools, his discovery of books, his flight to Europe, and the launching of his career as a writer. And yet *Stop-Time* is much closer in spirit to the three centuries of novel-writing that preceded it than it is to today's memoirs. Conroy gave his book an organizing principle beyond measuring his emotions and impulses and assigning blame or praise for them. *Stop-Time* is about journeys, about people in motion.



Kevin Chadwick

They are always humorously and adventurously rendered, and that makes the book picaresque in the manner of *Tom Jones*, as when Conroy races through a train station to avoid being sent to reform school:

> A reckless, all-out dash through the station, astonished faces falling behind one by one, frozen by my speed. It was like running through a crowd of cardboard cutouts. I swerved, jumped, and dodged between them to the doors, slipping past the outstretched arms of a guard into the open roar of the street, into the twilight and the high, vaulting sky. Running headlong through the streets I felt my limbs go wild with freedom.

Conroy's book shows that a memoir of dysfunction does not have to be a braggart's exercise void of moral considerations.

Indeed, even out-and-out mental illness can be presented with Conroy's clarity. Susanna Kaysen's 1993 *Girl, Interrupted* is a "crazy book" about genuine craziness, a minimalist story of a teenager's two-year stay in a mental hospital for "borderline personality disorder." And yet from a distance of twenty-five years, Kaysen takes a pull-up-your-socks attitude to her time as a mental patient. In fact, she does not believe she was mentally ill: "For many of us, the hospital was as much a refuge as it was a prison," she writes of herself and her fellow inmates:

> As long as we were willing to be upset, we didn't have to get jobs or go to school. We could weasel out of anything except eating and taking our medication.
>
> In a strange way we were free. We'd reached the end of the line. We had nothing more to lose. Our privacy, our liberty, our dignity: All of this was gone and we were stripped down to the bare bones of our selves.

Kaysen's *book* features none of the gloating *I've-been-there,-so-I-know* moral superiority we pick up in Knapp and Berger and Ryan.

And there are memoirs being written today in the craftsmanlike tradition of *Stop-Time*, works so different from the "crazy books" that they almost feel like they were written in a different century. Novelist Mark Salzman's *Lost in Place* (Random House, 224 pages, $22) is the story of a precocious teenage misfit in suburban Connecticut obsessed first with kung fu, then with marijuana. Salzman drifts from doting admiration of his social-worker,

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amateur-astronomer father, into self-loathing surliness, and finally into an adult friendship. His parents are not just a constant excuse and a pretext. In fact, they're not even constant: They're living, breathing human beings who change for the better and for the worse. And Salzman's narrative has an extreme modesty that makes it perhaps the funniest coming-of-age story since Clive James's *Unreliable Memoirs*. "Although it may be true these days that you can't throw a rock in America without hitting a psychic or a Tibetan lama or a yoga instructor, in 1973 becoming a Zen student in Ridgefield qualified as extraordinary," Salzman writes.

> Then there was kung fu. From the movies and television programs I saw, I gathered that one of the key benefits of being a Buddhist monk was that you could beat the crap out of bad people without getting emotionally involved or physically tired. You were always on the emotional high ground because you were a pacifist, but if someone was foolish enough to throw a punch at you anyway, surprise! Kung fu turned you into a cross between Sugar Ray Robinson, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Mahatma Gandhi. My hope was to impose this surprise on at least one of the eighth-grade assholes who used to pick on me for being tiny, polite to adults and a cellist in a youth orchestra.

Later, when he grows more serious about his Chinese, young Mark makes his first attempt to speak it in public, walking up to a cluster of old men and blurting out, *"Tongzhi! Nimen hao ma!"* ("Comrades! How are you?"), only to discover moments later that they are fire-breathing anti-Communists of the Overseas Chinese Kuomintang Association.

Mary Karr's *The Liars' Club* (Viking Penguin, 320 pages, $11.95) also has little in common with the run of "crazy books." Karr's book is again the tale of coming of age in a deranged family, and something far more: a Texas gothic version of *The Decameron* or *The Thousand and One Nights*. Karr's parents and family are, for all their gigantic flaws, inspired storytellers, and their narrative set pieces make the book not just a coming-of-age story but also the evocation of a Texas of the late 50s and 60s that has not only been lost but repudiated.

Which is not to say that her childhood is any less catastrophic than the worst childhood a "crazy book" writer could imagine. Karr's father is an angry, drunken union-radical redneck, her mother a drunk herself, seven times married and with a lively strain of nymphomania. Rather than divorce his wife, Mary's uncle power-saws his house in two, drags the two halves apart with a truck, boards up the exposed walls, and plants a row of trees between the two half-houses.

THE LITERAL SHAMELESSNESS OF THESE WORKS SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN FOR SELF-DEPRECATION: BY TELLING US THEY'RE CRAZY, THESE MODERN MEMOIRISTS ARE TELLING US THEY'RE HOLY.

Clearly, Karr was surrounded by nuts. And her own initiation into adulthood—particularly into sex, by her babysitter in Colorado—is nearly as gruesome as Ryan's.

The difference is that Karr, like a good novelist, sees human relationships as dynamic, while Ryan, like a clinician, sees them as static. Karr's father is riddled with disappointment—disappointment that he had daughters, not sons. When he retires, he himself turns into a shots-and-beers-for-breakfast alcoholic and lashes out at her constantly. Yet Mary stays in touch with her frequently incoherent mother and returns to Texas to care for her father during a revoltingly evoked five years between a massive stroke and a painful death. (What a description of bedsores!) The relationship of father and daughter is constantly changing, and Karr discovers that it is far more complicated than any simple condemnation:

> All the black crimes we believed ourselves guilty of were myths, stories we'd cobbled together out of fear. We expected no good news interspersed with the bad. Only the dark aspect of any story sank in.... It's only looking back that I believe the clear light of truth should have filled us, like the legendary grace that carries a broken body past all manner of monsters.

The fact that Karr is able to make peace with her mother after her father's death suggests she understands that people possess free will, that human beings are more complicated than animals in the zoo.

Contrast Karr's relationship with her parents to Ryan's in *Secret Life*. Karr has a *lousy childhood*, Ryan is a *victim*. Karr has a *problem*, Ryan has a *condition*. Karr has a *character*, Ryan has a *status*. While Karr's book, too, is a memoir, she writes out of the richer, individualistic ideology that reigned in the heyday of the novel.

The anti-individualist ethos of Ryan and most other memoirists—that emotional difficulties and personal misfortunes are an essential component not of one's life story but of one's permanent *identity*—also amounts to an ideology. If you link it with the sense of *calling* that Knapp feels about her drinking, or Berger feels about her back injury, or Wurtzel feels about her manic depression, or Ryan feels about his sex addiction, this ideology begins to look more and more like a religion.

It is all-explaining. It is deter-

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ministic. It posits a force that binds us together and determines our fates, even if that force—or Higher Power—is nothing more than molecular biology and Mendelian genetics. It possesses a rite of absolution: the Twelve-Step program. As it appears in these memoirs, its theology combines radical egalitarianism, the mass popularity of therapy, identity politics, a distrust of the family, and freak-show-type voyeurism masquerading as social concern. The literal shamelessness of these works should not be mistaken for self-deprecation: By telling us they're crazy, these modern memoirists are telling us they're holy.

At the very least, we can draw from these tales some lessons beloved of all religions at all times. These are all stories of how the apple doesn't fall very far from the tree. They are evidence that bad, boring people spring from bad, boring families. They suggest that the worst thing about addictions and complexes is that they breed in their sufferers a tedious solipsism. They prove that the ego is a prison. That's what our modern memoirists have to say, even if it's not what they think they have to say. ♦

Books

PULSING WITH LIFE

By J. Bottum

By any typical measure, Mary Kay Zuravleff's *The Frequency of Souls* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 244 pages, $23) is not a very good book. A tale of love, death, and refrigerators, this short first novel by a thirty-six-year-old former editor at the Smithsonian is not so much full of holes as full of protuberances: little knobs of irrelevant metaphor, subplot, and character that scrape and rattle as the story rolls along. The author has an uncertain ear, and at least once a chapter the narrating voice goes badly out of tune. (The book ends with a sentence—"The rubbery skin resisted the initial pressure of his molars and then burst open to his insistent bite, inviting him to eat of the cool, refreshing fruit"—that I had to read three times before I could believe she meant it.) Like those comedians who nudge you after they tell a joke, Zuravleff can't just use her symbolic devices: She has to explain them in case somebody missed the point. Her grasp of structure is shaky, and her sense of plot development a little weak.

PEOPLE WHO READ BECAUSE READING PLEASES THEM WILL UNDERSTAND WHEN I SAY THAT WHAT MAKES *THE FREQUENCY OF SOULS* RUN IS ITS AUTHOR'S EXUBERANT JOY IN TELLING A STORY.

In fact, while *The Frequency of Souls* is not a terrible novel, it falls so demonstrably short that the only interesting question I could find to ask is why I loved the book so much—why I read it in a single sitting, smiling the whole time, and why I've recommended it a dozen times in the days since I finished.

Some people read in order to have something to say and some people read because reading is something they're good at—and they will perhaps not know what I mean. But others read because reading pleases them, and these readers *will* understand when I say that what makes *The Frequency of Souls* run is its author's exuberant, gratuitous joy in telling a story. Mary Kay Zuravleff has written a genuinely *happy* book, the readers' novel of the year. To complain too much about its flaws is like complaining that P.G. Wodehouse only wrote melodramas or that *The Count of Monte Cristo* could use some editing.

The novel's hero, George Mahoney, is a handsome man in his late thirties, a design engineer at a refrigerator company where he thinks up such improvements as the self-defrosting freezer, the magnetic lock, and the built-in icemaker. His life can't be called bad. He has a pair of good kids in school, one charming and the other overweight but smart. His wife is a little domineering—every morning, she leaves two notes on the fridge, one outlining George's day and the other instructing her son to call George and read him the first note. But she's pretty in a Georgia-belle, southern sorority-sister sort of way, and she makes good money selling real estate in the D.C. suburbs. In fact, there's nothing much wrong with George, except that he has always been something of a refrigerated man and in recent years he's grown a little heavy. Like the bulky, outdated brand of machine on which he works, what George really needs is a redesign, but it's cheaper and easier just to keep patching up the existing icebox.

Enter Niagara Spense, George's

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new lab partner. As the novel opens, "the Veteran," George's long-disliked partner, has been forcibly retired and replaced with Niagara, a rangy, over-sized, half-deaf product of Cal Tech. Niagara is in search of what every "gangly girl scientist" needs: financing and a lab of her own. What she really wants is to speak to ghosts, but she's been forced to take a job in refrigerator design after she spent all her money on scanning equipment to find the "frequency of souls"—the radio bandwidths on which she claims the dead still chatter to one another late at night. With her hearing aid, costume jewelry, and home-stitched dresses made from sofa upholstery, Niagara is young, instinctively wise, interestingly ugly, and just what the frigid George needs to warm up his leftover life.

The romance between a refrigeration engineer and a gushing Niagara makes no more than a passable frame for a novel, though Zuravleff gives it at least one unexpected twist in interrupting the sex scene novelists seem to think mandatory nowadays. But, for the most part, she never strays far from a predictable course; this sort of romance has, after all, been written many times before. In plot and design, *The Frequency of Souls* reads as though the author spent too much time with Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist* before sitting down to write a D.C.-based version of Tyler's "strong, intuitive woman in Baltimore revives overly rational, emotionally deadened (but handsome) man" novel. "Ever since he had built his first radio set," the book begins, "George Mahoney remained convinced that the universe was soldered together with logic."

But there's nothing wrong with a predictable story frame, and it's all the extraneous material Zuravleff hangs on the frame that makes her novel fun anyway. She knows so much about refrigerators, and she's so in love with their symbolic power, that she can't stop herself from working them in everywhere she can. When George's son enters his school's science fair, she seizes her chance to design a project involving sound waves, coolant gases, and refrigerated grapes. When the old Veteran on his deathbed demands cryogenic freezing, she gets to show how the dead can be preserved. (Though when she has one character at the Veteran's funeral say, "His desire to be frozen is rather ironic," and another gasp, "Oh my God! Refrigerators and frozen, I just got it," I had to stifle the urge to hunt the author down and whack her upside the head.)

There's information here on how to blow up an apple, how electronics influences music, and how a telegraph works. There's electricity in the wires and electricity in the characters, souls coming alive in radio waves and souls coming alive in bodies. *The Frequency of Souls* is an awkward and aggravatingly overloaded little book. It's been a long time since I enjoyed reading anything half so much. ♦

Music

WHY THE BIG BANDS DIED

By Eric Felten

Stan Kenton had a grand ambition. He wanted to transform jazz into the modern equivalent of classical music. Over the years, Kenton wandered down one blind and tone-deaf alley after another in search of his new musical paradigm. Even before he had figured out what he wanted his new high-brow music to sound like, Kenton did know one thing for sure—it wouldn't be for dancing. Who, after all, dances in the rarefied world of the concert hall?

IT IS HARD TO REMEMBER THAT IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES, JAZZ WAS *THE* POPULAR MUSIC. FIFTY YEARS LATER, IT ACCOUNTS FOR A LITTLE LESS THAN 2 PERCENT OF ALL RECORD SALES.

"Jazz bands don't belong in ballrooms or hotel grills," Kenton said in 1947, "not as long as they cater primarily to dancers." Thirty years later, in May 1977, Kenton's grand vision had taken him, not to the concert stage, but to the Lancer Steak House in Schaumberg, Ill. There, his band blared bombastic Latin-rock epics in strange meters at a befuddled audience. When he was offered feeble smatterings of perplexed applause, Kenton was finally driven to desperate measures: "We're gonna play you a couple of dance tunes and see if we have any takers. If we don't, then we'll go back to what we've been doing." He was met by laughter from the Lancer Steak House crowd, and he laughed in response. "Our reputation as a dance band couldn't be worse. So even if you don't know how to dance, push each other around the

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floor. It'll look good for us." The band's performance was recorded that night, and without the slightest irony Kenton released the album under the title "Artistry in Symphonic Jazz."

The sound the steak-house audience heard was the death rattle of jazz itself.

It is hard to remember that in the 1930s and '40s, jazz was *the* popular music. It was rock, country, pop, and rap mixed together. It was everything. Fifty years later, jazz accounts for a little less than 2 percent of all record sales, about half of which can be attributed to the Muzak-like saxophonist Kenny G. But in the 1930s, jazz bands of great artistic distinction—Duke Ellington's, Benny Goodman's, Count Basie's, Tommy Dorsey's—were also the most popular musical acts in America. Now, large jazz ensembles don't even make up a sliver of the music business.

The precipitous decline of the big bands after World War II is the great mystery of American music, a pop-culture conundrum as confounding as the fate of the Stonehenge Druids or the Hohokam Indians. Any number of explanations have been offered. There's the business-cycle explanation: Inflated wartime salaries and the postwar economic bust of 1946 made big bands an economic dinosaur. There's the right-to-work explanation: When the American Federation of Musicians called a strike in 1942 and refused to play on any commercial record for more than a year, singers rose to their current level of prominence while bandleaders and band members fell into obscurity. There's the anti-bebop explanation: With indecipherable melodies and cryptic harmonies, the music of Charlie Parker and others drove away all but the self-consciously cool. Finally, there's the "Rebel Without a Cause" explanation: Teenagers in the 1950s rejected swing for rock as a way to rebel against their big-band-loving parents.

All these explanations have merit, but they do not suffice. What killed the big bands was neither economics, taxes, changing popular tastes, nor new styles in youthful rebellion. No, the cultural ambitions of the bandleaders themselves sank the swing ship. They didn't want to play music for people to dance to; they wanted people to sit, close their eyes, and study the music as it played. Stan Kenton wasn't the only jazz musician to turn up his nose at a dancing audience; Artie Shaw's discontent was so deep that he walked away from music at the zenith of his popularity. "They always wanted to hear *dance* music," the 86-year-old Shaw sneered in a recent NPR interview. In a way, the big bands were victims of their own aesthetic achievement. As the swing era wore on, the number of serious jazz critics multiplied. And almost to a man, they whispered in bandleaders' ears: "You're too good for dancing; dancers don't deserve you; you belong on the concert stage."

"BIG BAND RENAISSANCE," THE NEW SET FROM THE SMITHSONIAN, PROVES THAT ORCHESTRAL JAZZ ISN'T SO MUCH A CORPUS AS A CORPSE.

The dance bands of the '30s and '40s ceased to be dance bands largely of their own accord. And in so doing they abandoned not only their *raison d'être*, but the touchstone of their art. Nothing killed the big bands. They committed suicide.

There is ample forensic evidence of this self-immolation in a recent five-CD set from the Smithsonian called "Big Band Renaissance: the Evolution of the Jazz Orchestra." This is a collection of recordings from the end of World War II to the present and represents an effort to demonstrate that the jazz orchestra is alive and kicking. But "Big Band Renaissance" actually proves that modern orchestral jazz isn't so much a corpus as a corpse, and the perfect subject for an autopsy.

Well, maybe not the *perfect* subject. "Big Band Renaissance" is such an odd anthology that it almost seems as if its compiler, Bill Kirchner, left out the best of a bad lot to make the situation look worse than it is. There is a ho-hum version of "I Remember Clifford" by Dizzy Gillespie and His Orchestra, but Gillespie's brilliant bebop big-band recordings aren't here—there's no "The Shape of Things to Come," no "Dizzy's Blues," and no "Manteca." Woody Herman is rep-

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resented by a lugubrious 1972 rock-ballad version of "Summer of '42," not by his postwar recordings of "Lemon Drop" and "Early Autumn."

The first disc, mostly made up of late-'40s music rooted in the dance beat of the swing era, isn't too bad at all—Duke Ellington performing "Perdido," the Basie band swinging through "Rambo," and even Stan Kenton blasting through one of his few dance-tune hits, "Intermission Riff." But even here one can discern why sensible people stopped buying big-band records. Boyd Raeburn is on hand with an annoying effort at surrealism titled "Dalvatore Sally." Ray McKinley provides an angular piece of modernism with an apt title—"Idiot's Delight."

The second disc offers more evidence that most postwar big-band jazz was musically bankrupt long before the orchestras stopped paying their bills. Exhibit A is "A Trumpet," arranged for Stan Kenton's band by Bob Graettinger, a composer whose atonality makes Schönberg sound like a model of melodicism.

Graettinger's conceit that big-band jazz could be modeled on European art music may have been the reductio ad absurdum of the anti-dance movement in jazz, but there were many other arrangers vying for nadir honors. The arrangers for the acid-drenched Don Ellis Orchestra of the late 1960s and early '70s seemed to hate the concept of dancing as much as they disliked music itself. How else can one explain their penchant for time signatures with 19 or even 33 eighth-note beats to the measure? "Chain Reaction," the Ellis cut selected by the Smithsonian, is in 13/8 time. And the beat goes like this: 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3. Try to dance to that.

By contrast, the pre-war big bands were basically *required* to provide a beat for social dancers; dancers actually brought large jazz orchestras into fashion in the early '30s. Before then, jazz was primarily the work of just a few players; Louis Armstrong's seminal groups were made up of five or seven musicians. This was for aesthetic reasons—only small groups can really improvise, and improvisation was at the heart of New Orleans jazz. But it was also economically sound. After all, it's obviously in a bandleader's interest to keep his band's size (and thus his payroll) down. The increasing size of jazz bands in the early '30s not only cost bandleaders money at a time when money was tight, it limited the ability of their musicians to improvise.

So why did the size of the swing bands double? Because of the 21st amendment to the Constitution. During Prohibition, nightclubs were usually illicit and therefore small. It wasn't until the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 that large-scale nightclubs and dancehalls became the norm across the country. As the venues grew in size, so did the orchestras, for the simple reason that the rooms needed a big sound. Without sound systems capable of boosting each instrument's volume, it was impossible for a seven- or ten-piece band to fill a room as vast as Roseland in New York or the Aragon in Chicago.

John Kascht

The need to fill massive halls with danceable music shaped the structure and the sound of swing bands. The rhythm section—piano, guitar, bass, and drums—had to work in near lockstep to supply the underlying groove. The bass and guitar would strike each beat. The pianist would pound out 4/4 time

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with a left-hand stride as swing drummers thumped.

But no rhythm section by itself was enough to fill a grand ballroom. The horns had to contribute as well. It was no accident that riffing—the rhythmic repetition of musical fragments—was the definitive characteristic of the swing sound. The use of danceable riffs, perfected by the Count Basie band in the late '30s, led to a miraculous marriage of groove, melody, harmony, and improvisation that has never been duplicated.

The lack of amplification wasn't the only technological limitation crucial to swing's artistic success. In the days when records were made of shellac, the maximum length of a record side was about three and a half minutes. This was thought a great impediment to the grand visions of jazz composers, but it imposed an extraordinary musical discipline on big-band arrangers. They had to learn to construct a beginning, middle, climax, and ending all packed into three minutes' time.

This limitation brought out the best in Duke Ellington, among others: Who in his right mind would prefer Ellington's meandering, 13-minute, four-sided "Reminiscing in Tempo" to the breathtaking perfection of "Concerto for Cootie," which clocks in at 3 minutes and 18 seconds? It was doubly unfortunate that the long-playing record (or LP) came along just as the big bands were falling victim to their high-art ambitions. Without time constraints, length became just another of the excesses of the modern jazz arranger.

When improved sound systems liberated jazzmen from the restrictions of the old-time dance hall, the postwar big bands indulged themselves like college freshmen at a keg party. Gone for good was the danceable 4/4 drum thump; instead, rhythm sections became unpredictable. Arrangers stopped using horns as a part of the rhythmic engine, treating them instead as tonal colors on a confusing palette. Up-tempo came to mean breakneck speed. Ballads became dirges.

Ironically, the dance bands were casting off the dance idiom at the very time the newly dominant bebop jazzmen were struggling to appeal to dancers. The savvy Dizzy Gillespie knew that unless modern jazz got its rhythmic house in order, it was doomed: "We'll never get bop across to a wide audience until they can dance to it," he wrote in the late '40s. "They're not particular about whether you're playing a flatted fifth or a ruptured 129th as long as they can dance."

THE THREE-AND-A-HALF-MINUTE MAXIMUM LENGTH OF A SHELLAC RECORD IMPOSED AN EXTRAORDINARY DISCIPLINE ON BIG-BAND ARRANGERS.

Gillespie may have thought a good dance rhythm was merely a sop to his audience, but one of the earliest jazz critics, R.D. Darrell, recognized that dancing was not just something musicians had to put up with to get paid. In a 1932 essay, he argued that dance was essential to Duke Ellington's artistic success. "As a purveyor and composer of music that must be danced to (if he is to earn a living)," Darrell wrote, "Ellington's composition is narrowly limited by dance exigencies while he is allowed a wide range of experimentation in the way of instrumentation and performance. What is remarkable is that working within constricted walls he has yet been able to give free rein to his creative imagination and racial urge for expression."

A decade later, Ellington had tired of these restrictions (and was doubtless sick of the boorishness of many dancers, particularly the rude jitterbug subset known as ickies) and became a proponent of concert jazz. "The purpose and virtue of the concert hall is that in it people have listening isolation and do nothing but listen," Ellington wrote years later, "whereas in a dance hall, they end up doing a lot of things people with social aspirations want to do. They want to dance and embrace the girls."

And yet, when the big bands separated themselves from dancers, musicians could no longer feel the exhilaration that comes from interacting with a crowd of bodies impelled to move in rhythm to the music. In the concert hall the audience gives nothing but its applause at the end of the performance. But, as drummer Jimmy Crawford once said, "In ballrooms, where there's dancing like I was raised on, when everybody is giving to the beat, and just moving, and the house is bouncing—that inspires you to play."

These days the jazz establishment constantly bemoans its lack of commercial success. Audiences are uneducated, they say. Jazz gets no radio airplay. Television ignores them. Government doesn't give them enough money. In other words, it's everyone's fault—everyone but the musicians'.

The key to a jazz revival is for the musicians to alter their relationship with the audience, letting the listeners participate in the music, letting them "give to the beat" by dancing to it.

Rock music has revitalized itself time and again by returning to its dance essentials. Jazz can still save itself—artistically and commercially—by embracing its dance tradition. The only thing standing in the way is 50 years of prejudice and pretension. ♦

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Parody

Widows, Orphans Dominate Convention 2000

Lamb Chop to Address Depublicrats Tonight

By Dan Balz
Washington Post Staff Writer

MACOMB COUNTY, MICH., Sept. 3, 2000 – It was a day for tears, inspiration and non-partisanship as the U.S. Paralympic team joined Barney the purple dinosaur in a rendition of our the national anthem, "I Love You (You Love Me)," at the first-ever joint political convention. The USAir Depublicrat Telethon, hosted by Jerry Lewis, got underway in this crucial swing district last night with the three presidential contenders - Democrat Christopher Reeve, Republican Kathie Lee Gifford, and David Gergen of the Reform Party - pledging to put aside their narrow partisan differences to celebrate America in all its unified diversity.

"We are united in our differences," Reeve said, while Gifford said they were "diversified in our unity." Gergen said that Reeve and Gifford were "absolutely right."

Following the anthem, the 43 million attendees - all those covered under the auspices of the Americans with Disabilities Act - joined their delegations. No longer selected by state, they are grouped according to their "differently-abled" status. There was a moment of tension when a delegate assigned to Bulimia insisted she actually belonged to Anorexia, which had a better spot on the convention floor. Rebuffed in her efforts to switch delegations, she vomited on a delegate from Obesity.

The USAir Depublicrat Telethon was devised in 1998 by Republican party chair Haley Barbour and Democratic party chair Christopher Dodd to cope with declining television ratings. The networks weren't interested in that either, so the Depublicrats merged their convention with the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon. "We assured ourselves 20 hours of uninterrupted Labor Day coverage," Barbour said, "while sticking to the one issue that brings the parties together: Trying to take the most advantage of people in wheelchairs."

When USAir threw in $25 million to sponsor the event, plans were complete. Today's agenda includes a planned spontaneous demonstration by the delegates from Nymphomania, expected to be one of the best-attended events of the convention.

Featured speakers tonight include Harry Bultasian, a man who mangled his hand in a garbage disposal. "He's an American hero," Dodd said. Bultasian will be followed by a video tribute to puppies and kittens directed by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason before keynote speaker Lamb Chop takes the podium to tell the moving story of how she held the threadbare Kukla and Ollie in her mouth as they died an agonizing death from cancer of the plastic eyeball.

"There'll be a lot of emotion tonight," Jerry Lewis promised. "Don't go away!"

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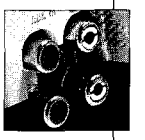

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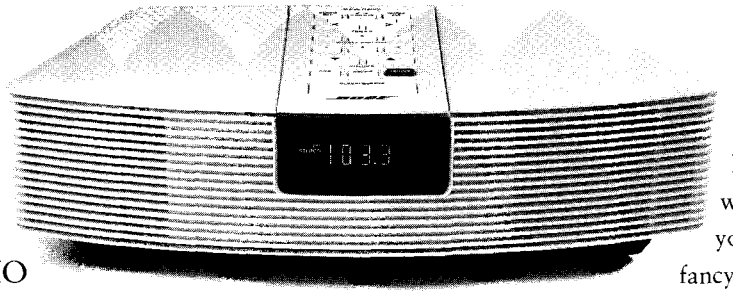

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We think the Wave radio is the best-sounding radio you can buy. And audio critics agree.

Radio World called the sound "simply amazing... a genuine breakthrough in improved sound quality." *Business Week* named the Wave radio a "Best New Product of 1994."

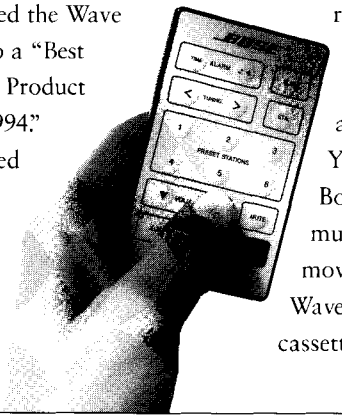
Popular Science called it a "sonic marvel," and gave it a prestigious "Best of What's New" award. The key

The speakers in conventional radios cannot produce lifelike bass, which is essential for great sound.

Only the Wave radio with acoustic waveguide speaker technology produces high-quality sound with full, rich bass.

REMOTE-CONTROLLED CONVENIENCE.

Operate the radio from across the room with the credit card-sized remote control. Set six AM and six FM stations, and switch between them at the touch of a button. You can even bring great Bose sound to recorded music, TV programs, or movies by connecting the Wave radio to your CD or cassette player, TV, or VCR.



Wired magazine said it has a "clean, sweet sound that will have your friends wondering where you've hidden your fancy speakers." But you have to hear the Wave radio for yourself to believe it. Call today.

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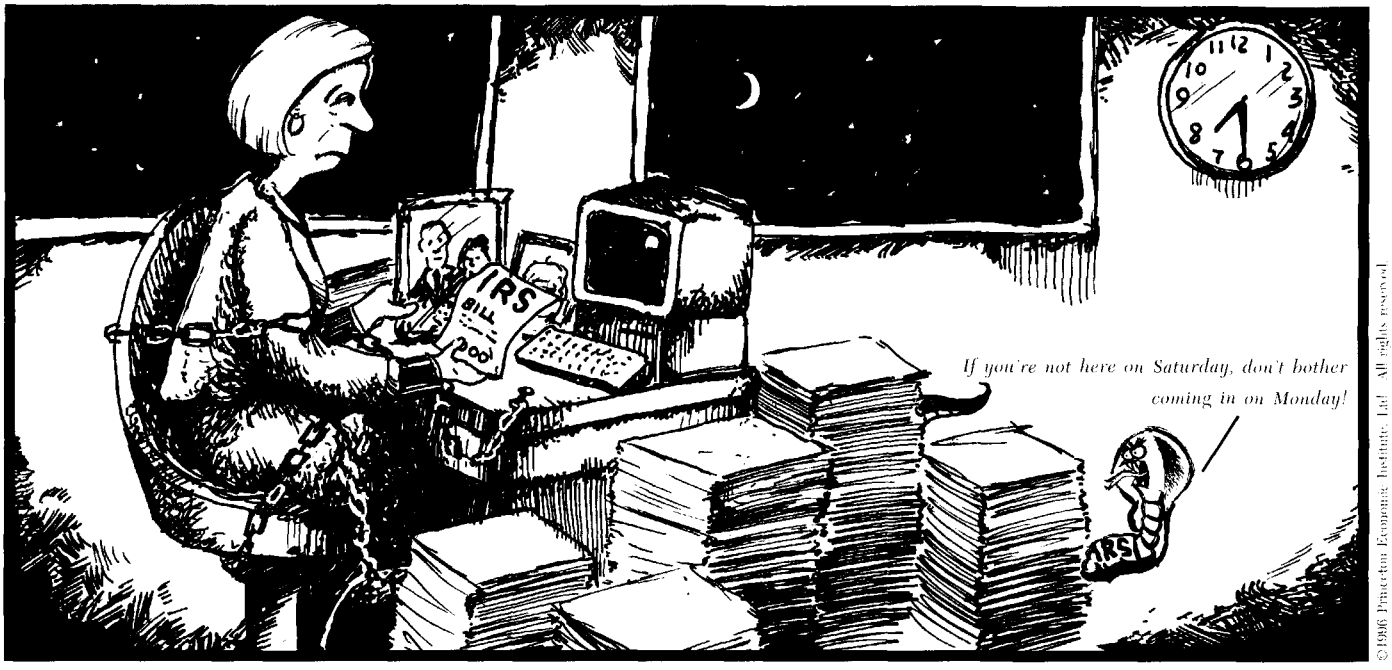

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Our income tax chains mothers to a job — and threatens our right to economic liberty.

While we argue about taxing the rich, nobody ever defines who the rich really are. According to the IRS, that definition was an annual income of $5 million in 1940. By 1992, that moved down scale to a very blue-collar $52,500. As the debate over making sure the rich pay their "fair" share rages on, we are ignoring the impact of rising taxation upon the American working *family*.

It now takes two incomes to support a family at a standard which *once required only one income just* 30 years ago. In the process our national debt has exploded and we have nothing to show for it.

Like citizens of Rome, we lose democratic *and* economic freedoms through taxes.

Democracy was once the light of economic freedom — the way out of serfdom where the state took 50 percent of your earnings. Today, that economic freedom is lost with the state extracting nearly 40 percent of the income from the average American family. It was only 25 percent in the 1960s! In Rome, it was obvious. Tax laws chained you to your profession and your location, the better to find you to collect Caesar's due.

Many women today are chained to their jobs because they lost their economic freedom to stay home and raise their children during early, formative years. If we truly care about the people of this nation and our future, we must honestly look at the impact of big government and the rising demands for taxation upon our middle class.

Mothers always pay for the foolishness of governments.

War is only the most common example. In government's all consuming quest to promise more to voters — mothers, women, and the American family have come out the losers. When we enslave that segment of society, our prosperity collapses like Rome, Spain, Russia, and so many others that have gone before us.

Promise freedom. Deliver serfdom.

History warns that economic decay has always been created by the extravagance of the state and in its wake inevitably follows social decay and rising crime. Only a fool ignores the lessons of history and that is why it tends so often to repeat.

We have a rare and brief moment in time — perhaps our last window of opportunity to reflect and change the course of posterity. To ignore the warnings of history, after the social and economic decay we have witnessed in the past 30 years, is to invite the fate suffered by all previous democracies — suicide. Society will be torn apart unless the taxation demands upon the American family are not tempered and controlled. If we do not restore economic freedom to the American family, we will become a mere footnote in the annals of the 21st century.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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